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# RIFTWOOD

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FLORENCE E. DE CERKEZ





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# DRIFTWOOD

*And Other Poems*

BY

FLORENCE E. DE CERKEZ



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*TO MY MOTHER*



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## DRIFTWOOD

Life's ocean casts up many a drifting spar,  
Flotsam of wrecks long since without a name,  
That lends the hearth a variable flame,  
And glitters like the Cross whose rays afar  
Shine on the seas beyond the coral bar.  
It keeps its tale of glory or of shame  
And will not ever tell us whence it came  
Nor of what forest growth its fibers are.  
Clear fire of driftwood, burning on the shore,  
Cast forth your changing hues across the main  
And light a phantom vessel on the waves,  
It bears the forms we never shall see more,  
Those whom the watchers waited for in vain,  
The Dreams that sleep in unforgotten graves.



R-O-S-E-M-A-R-Y



## MY SONG

Many a broken heart on earth  
Hath eased itself with song  
For the rough road to death from birth  
Is wearisome and long.  
Though kindly voices cheer us, yet  
Something upon the way  
Is lost, and we cannot forget  
The glory of the day.  
Yes, all have had their hour of pain,  
But few, as I have done,  
Will try to match their loss with gain  
By counting one by one  
Their falling tears as if to string  
With them a rosary,  
And few their open heart will fling  
At every passer by.  
This have I done, or seemed to do,  
For singing to the wind  
I have allowed men through and through  
To penetrate my mind.  
So seems it. Aye, but God's above  
And peace be to the rest!—  
Deeper than death, for deep as love  
Lies that within my breast  
Which idly I appear to trail  
Before a careless throng;  
To me as to the corn a flail  
Is my loud burst of song.  
And yet the effort is in vain,  
The brimming vase is set  
In ice that settles round again  
Upon a deep regret.

## THE ROSE

There is a rose that decks the paths of men  
With trailing beauty and a scent divine:  
It blossoms where no mortal could divine,  
But when once plucked, it never blooms again.  
Where it hath been uprooted from the soil,  
With bleeding hearts we watch the lonely spot;  
None find it, save by chance, howe'er they toil,  
Yet pity on the soul that find it not.

## BROKEN HARPSTRINGS

There are some feelings words portray,  
That waken, like a penciled head,  
Some darkling image of the dead,  
So there are griefs that we may say;

But there are agonies of mind  
That snap the heart strings, like a harp  
Where some unskilful hand a sharp  
Fierce chord has struck, and left behind

A shattered thing unfit for song;  
So conquered by the storm we lie  
Borne on the wind that whirls us by,  
Pitiless as it rides along.

## NIGHT IN AFRICA

Thou pale young moon, tell me, how does my love?  
Thinks she of me, now on this April night?  
Sees she in slumber one who, though he rove  
All the world over, still has her in sight;  
Still has her eyes, her violet eyes on his,  
With this sky of Africa above him.

Were yonder desert fiercer than it is,  
It were a paradise so she did love him.  
Thou pale young moon, let me be sure:  
Glint through her lattice;—on her little hand,—  
Now bless mine own. There, now I can endure,  
Though all the world were a desert of sand!  
Say, doth she sleep, or waketh she, or dreams,  
Ah not of me, but of the latest face  
Her open eyes have lit on?—Let thy beams  
Flash on my soul a response, let them trace  
A picture of my love, that I may see  
If she doth watch or dream, perchance, of me.

### NOW

We know we live, we know we die,  
We do not know the goal.  
We cannot tell or whence, or why  
Or whither. In the soul  
Arises doubt we shame to stem,  
And hope we fear to scorn;  
We weep the lost and follow them;  
Say, is it death, or dawn?

Shall we not love each other now,  
Since this is all we know?  
Time is so swift, we watch not how  
The summers come and go.  
Yet still I dream thy love some eve  
Will close upon my breast,  
And I shall touch thy lips, and leave  
The rest, and leave the rest.

## HER KNIGHT

How were the knight whom you should stoop to  
wed ?

Apart we sat  
In the wide window seat. She bent her head  
And laughed at that,  
Half coy and half defiant; "Thus", she said :

"If I should choose a knight to be my love,  
He should be fair,  
His very voice and gesture made to move,  
His talents rare,  
If I should choose a knight to be my love.

If I should choose a knight to be my lord,  
He should be great,  
Feared of his peers, and by the low adored  
In princely state,  
If I should choose a knight to be my lord.

If I should choose a knight to be my own,  
He should be strong,  
And by his native fearlessness, have grown  
Scornful of wrong,  
So should he be whom I should call my own."

## A PRAYER

At night, when darkness closes  
And all reposes,  
In the still air  
Rises my prayer  
God keep thee in His care.

At morn, when day begins,  
And sunlight wins  
The hill-top gray,  
For thee I pray,  
"God bless thee love today."

At noontide, when a hush  
Falls on the rush  
Of busy feet  
In the close street,  
I pray: "God shield thee sweet."

And in the holy light  
Of God's pure sight,  
Whene'er I may,  
The livelong day,  
"Love her O Lord" I say.

## RAGATZ

Thou art alone. No rustle on the hills  
Nor drowsy twitter in the fragrant wood.  
Nature has gone to rest, and silence fills  
The echoes with its harmony. Her brood  
The eagle long has gathered in the nest  
That overhangs yon distant purple crag  
Shadowed against the crystal light. The rest  
Sinks into deepening twilight, where the flag  
Flutters its purple streamers o'er the marsh,  
And the white mist rolls up the valley. Now  
Thy soul can commune with itself. All harsh  
Discordant sounds are hushed, and now the flow  
Of solemn thought can freely drift, and bear  
Thee like the Delphian winds a mystic word  
To live upon hereafter.

Speak, I hear,  
Majestic Silence! Often have I heard

Ere now thy voice at close of dewy eve,  
Falling like plumes cast down from twilight's wings;  
Or when the rising sun begins to cleave  
In coloured shafts the cloud, and earthly things  
With light of Eden blest, await the day:  
The timid flowers with eyes half oped, the birds  
Swaying to plume their wings, the glistening spray  
That not a breeze stirs else, and the mild herds  
Ranging the meadows; these, all these, have borne  
Thy still mysterious voice, thy wordless song  
Unruffled to mine ear. And I have gone  
My daily journey though the way was long,  
And wearisome the road. But scarce an hour  
The charm of harmonies sublime can rest  
In perfect peace, or battle with the power  
Of earth's wild discords in the human breast.  
Thus as I gaze on nature's placid beauty,  
On this grey starlit plain, these rock-cleft skies,  
Deep in my soul the clarion peal of duty  
Starts self-evoked from nature's harmonies!  
Canst thou no more then, Nature all-pervading,  
Canst thou no more than stir within us fires  
In their fierce course the very soul invading,  
Consumed at last with their own vain desires?

### SOLITUDE

Thou canst not love like simple men  
Who seek for pleasure,  
Nor thy proud aspirations pen  
Within their measure;  
Thou canst not find a soul to share  
Thine own unrest,  
And so thy pain alone must bear  
Within thy breast.

## PROMONTOGNO

Hail once again ye mountains! Thrice the year  
Hath strewn your rocks with hairbells, thrice the  
stream  
Hath leapt from wintry snows into the lap  
Of summer meadows, and the quiet herd  
Have sought their scanty pasture on the height  
Since I have trod this path, and in the shade  
Of solitary pines have heard the wind,  
And watched the brawling stream as I do now.  
Rush on, rush on thou homeless stream, and ye  
Sentinels of the mountain fastnesses,  
Ye ancient pines, wave your dark spears. To me  
The wandering stream, the voices of the wind  
Have nought of strange or fearful; kin am I,  
Kin to you all, though loftier ye and pure,  
Temples of God's eternal majesty.

## A STORM IN LUCERNE

Dark lowers the cloud; a straggling sunbeam  
throws  
Its broken Shaft upon the Storm Fiend's shield,  
His inky buckler with red lightning blazoned;  
Fled is all good, and nought resists the winds  
That howling now assail yon noble oak,  
Mad at resistance, with redoubled rage;  
They laugh to hear his sturdy sinews crack  
And whistle as he crashes to the earth.  
So have I seen ignoble fury work  
Its utmost on a great and vanquished head.

## MARECHAL NEIL

I wandered by the borders of the sea  
    That knows no tide,  
Where the grey olive bloom of Italy  
    Spreads far and wide.  
The sun upon the lea made silver sheets  
    Of all the waves  
And shadowless were all the village streets  
    And still as graves,  
While on the sultry air the orange flower  
    Threw languid scent,  
And sharply through the cypress boughs a shower  
    Of sunlight bent.  
It brimmed on all the orchid's tinted cups  
    In the tall grass  
And shimmered on a thousand buttercups  
    Like fine spun glass;  
It kissed the crimson kerchief of a maid  
    Upon the boulder  
Bearing an earthen pitcher lightly laid  
    Across her shoulder,  
While, by a wall screened with laburnum trees,  
    Their blossoms trailing  
Against its warm white marble in the breeze,  
    Through an old railing  
A yellow rose sheer on the bare sky flashed  
    Upon my sight,  
The flesh of its sun-burnished petals dashed  
    With scent and light.  
And oft since then its flame had cheered my eyes  
    And warmed my heart  
Remembered under grey and gloomy skies  
    In foreign part;  
When, O strange chance! as Springtime flowered  
    the wood

And cleared the snows,  
You gave me—in the morning light you stood,—  
A yellow rose.

## A SONG NOT TO BE PUT TO MUSIC

I loved you as we love a land,  
Though foreign, yet familiar grown,  
And when I closely held your hand,  
I knew that you were not my own.

Yet common sympathies had moved  
Our kindred spirits toward each other;  
I loved you truly, but I loved  
With the strong fondness of a brother.

And if another feeling oft  
Stirred me when gazing in your eyes,  
I felt it drowned in tears arise,  
And sink again, remote and soft.

Oh, tender as the distant ring  
Of passing bells at eventide!  
No chance of time or fate can bring  
A truer being to my side.

No voice will ever sound so dear,  
No heart will ever beat so close,  
No step so gently wake mine ear  
Forever!—Thou hast picked the rose,

Thou hast the secret of my breast,  
And like a desecrated tomb,  
My heart, though wrapt in cypress gloom  
Hast lost its dear and sacred guest.

## THE RUINS OF EBENBURG

Oh what grief my heart o'erwhelms  
As I see our meeting place!  
And the shadows of the elms  
That were playing on your face!

In my fancy you are there,  
Standing silent by my side,  
So one sees the chamber bare  
Where a friend has lived and died;

Yet such sorrow finds relief  
In the thought that though unseen  
Still the spirit shares our grief  
With the love that once hath been;

Whereas I my pain must bear  
In a solitary breast,  
With your shadow everywhere  
Haunting me, a stranger guest.

Yes a stranger in the halls  
Where we welcomed you so oft,  
Silently its footstep falls  
Gentle is its voice and soft,

Pleading with the eloquence  
Of the frank familiar eyes,  
Pleading with the strength intense  
Of a thousand memories:—

“Tell me, love, do you remember  
How we culled the autumn flowers,  
How we watched the dying ember  
By the hearth in winter hours;

How a sadness 'twixt us crept  
With the blooming of the heath,  
While our love triumphant leapt,  
Like a lily from its sheath?—

I remember in the woods  
How the ashes crimson berry  
In your hair I wove, your moods  
Flitting, gusty, sad and merry;

How we climbed this ruined buttress  
Crowned with grasses waving wide,  
Stood alone, my gentle mistress,  
For the first time side by side,

Heedless of the many voices  
Ringing in the castle shade,  
Heedless of the distant noises  
That the world without us made,

And together closed our spirits,  
Strangers but an hour before,  
God forgive us, faults or merits  
Weighed not!—Strangers evermore.

Strangers since we bowed in sorrow  
To a stern necessity,  
Strangers till the last tomorrow  
Wastes into Eternity." . . .

Leave me, shadow from the distance  
Of th' irrevocable past;  
In a higher strung existence  
Let us both find peace at last.

And within, the sacred power  
That hath seemed to bear no fruit,  
Strong in Charity shall flower  
From its deep and mangled root.

Oftentimes the spirit weaves  
Scented wreaths of its regret,  
As upon the fallen leaves  
Blooms the springtime violet;

So in after years perchance  
You shall pass me by unmoved,  
Meeting with a careless glance  
The forgotten face you loved.

### CLARENS

*(To Byron)*

Fall twilight on the lake, while yonder boat  
Fleets homeward like a curlew on the wing,  
And let my fancy now at random float  
Like yon grey vapours slowly darkening.  
How the white moonlight on the water burns  
As with the blended fire of myriad stars,  
And how the restless element returns  
The flash reflected in a thousand bars!  
Deep in its bosom plunge the fiery flakes  
Through the dark leaves of the old sycamore,  
While the light wave monotonously breaks  
On the smooth rolling pebbles of the shore.  
Pause we awhile before the darkness closes,  
Listen, O Byron, to the murmuring wave,  
The stillness of the summer night disposes  
The mind to silent meditation grave.  
Yet gaze not inward. See the mountain chain  
Rearing its snows into the changing sky,  
The moonlight waters and the glimmering plain,  
Let these attract, these hold thy wandering eye.

But turn it not within, do not disturb  
The peace of Nature and the sense of rest  
With marsh-light thoughts, but bow thy head and  
    curb

The bitter musing of thy wayward breast.  
Thou in whose soul of flame was written deep  
The name of poet, rise above the storms  
To regions worthy of thyself, and keep  
The gods for thy companions, not those forms  
Which jostle in thy brain with petty noise.  
O child of Greece that to th' Ionian gale,  
Harmonious in thy pure artistic poise,  
Like some grand temple years in vain assail,  
A pile of mouldering greatness, ivy-bound,  
Opposest,—Bard of passion, quell thy heart!  
Its voice still thrills the Jura, and the sound  
Evokes thy wrath, hence never to depart.

## THE TWO LANGUAGES

My mother tongue and that I spoke with you  
    In me contend,  
So on the old affections dawned the new  
    To meet and blend  
With all I had been, as the flowering vine  
    Around the oak,  
Creeping along centennial boughs will twine  
    Its graceful cloak;  
Yet closely clinging to the native bark  
    In silent strife,  
The verdant tendrils, growing in the dark,  
    May sap its life.

## INSOMNIA

While all the household sleeps,  
    I watch alone,  
My sorrowing spirit keeps  
    Its vigil lone;  
As the white stars wheel by,  
    The lamp burns low,  
Before my open eye,  
    Dreams come and go.  
Soul of my dreams! thou Shade  
    So dearly loved,  
The promise I had made  
    Lo I have proved:  
As creeps to light the dawn  
    Behind the roofs,  
As start the cock's loud horn  
    The wheel and hoofs,  
I feel the life I gave  
    To thee is thine;  
This is an empty grave  
    This clay of mine.

## TO THE HUDSON

Ere this I've wandered by thy reedy shores,  
Along thy swelling broad majestic stream  
Beneath the leaves of ancient sycamores  
And in the twilight's green ethereal gleam.  
When idle thoughts fled like a swallow's wing  
'Mid shadows of the future through my breast,  
As in these woods, by fountains murmuring,  
I rocked my spirit, on thy waves, to rest.  
But now how strange, O Hudson, are thy banks;  
I hear no music in thy waters roll,  
Although the Palisades their rocky flanks  
Rear proud as ever at the journey's goal.

The pale familiar stream from the West  
Upon the Point where science trains the sword,  
And yet the lovely scene does not afford  
My eye and heart a sense of joy or rest.

Fade O thou sunlight of Columbia's strand,  
With softer glow fall in another clime  
Where vineyards smile upon a mellow land  
And breezes waft abroad the even chime;  
Drop from your heights, ye frowning Palisades,  
To rolling uplands crowned with ruined halls;  
Break open quarries in the autumn glades,  
And pearl the rills with many waterfalls;  
Deck with a wreath of legend all the scene,  
Bring down the glory of the sky above  
Into my heart, and I shall walk between  
The Rhineland vines, and once more learn to love.

Never again on earth. . . . That sun for me  
Is set forever on a shoreless deep;  
And my life dream wrapt in the ne'er to be,  
As with myself a lonely watch I keep.  
And why? Because an hour we walked in bliss?  
Because we touched each other's hand, and knew  
Tempests of passion that a living kiss  
Hath never sealed? My love, I lived for you.  
Words are not deep enough;—My spirit's tide  
Surges in silence at each passing hour,  
Filled with a yearning that nought else beside,  
Nought but thyself can fill, then in the power  
Of lonely wretchedness receding leaves  
My stranded thought. Thy eyes are on my eyes,  
Bright image, while my thirsty longing greives  
For the clear draught this desert world denies.  
Where art thou?—Yea, my life is void and dark  
And loveless since we parted. . . . Nevermore  
Never on earth to own each other. Hark

The Rhine is swollen and the rapids roar.  
Would I were buried in his rocky bed,  
Whilst thou in a fair-fitted barge shouldst pass  
Above my forehead in the water grass  
And sorrow. . . . Peaceful, peaceful are the  
dead.

## I WOULD FORGET

I would forget thee as the swallows fly  
On wings of steel when last the dying wood  
Smiles in the golden leaf, not put thee by  
As the mere vision of a lighter mood.

I would not have a course of slow decay  
Wear out the passion that has stirred my breast  
Doomed like a ruined stronghold, day by day  
To lose the glory that I once possessed.

For I have done as Arthur's last true knight  
With the true love which thou hadst given me  
When he descended from the frosty height  
And threw Excalibur into the sea.

## FOREBODING

O let me live, I ask of ye no more  
But let me live,  
Not yet the storm, I scarce have left the shore,  
Love left behind,  
Not yet—my swelling sails but take the wind—  
Some respite give.

Still on the port the lingering light of day  
Sheds molten gold,  
As to the verge I take my lonely way;  
Night closes in.

Then give me space the open sea to win,  
Darkness withhold.

Yet wherefore should I fear the lowering cloud  
That banks the West,  
Though on the bright young moon a gloomy shroud  
Be early thrown,  
And though the sleeping sea begin to moan  
Its deep unrest?

I do not fear, ye winds and threatening storm  
Your utmost force;  
As yonder wave the worst ye can perform  
Breaks on a rock,  
I dash to foam the ineffectual shock  
Would check my course.

### SONNET

I read Evangeline's sad tale last night,  
And by the short'ning candle watched the scene  
Grow, and dissolve: Arcadia's meadows green,  
The burning village and the exiles' flight;  
The victory of tyranny o'er right;  
The wandering lovers with a world between  
Their sundered steps; Two beings which unseen  
Glowed in each other like a beacon light  
Until the end; and the last short embrace  
In the still ward. "Peace, peace, for God is able,"  
And the book fell, when sudden burning tears  
Dimmed all the room, and I beheld thy face,  
Resting upon thy hand, sunk by the table  
In reverie, and no older than thy years.

## TO MY MUSE

Hast thou one only theme, O Muse,  
Whene'er I call thee to my side,  
Hast thou no word, whate'er betide,  
Canst thou no consolation use,

But wake the accents of the lyre  
To one melodious tuneful theme,  
And are these ashes of a dream  
All thou hast left of early fire?

Are these dead ashes all thou hast  
To bless my sorrow with, my friend,  
Thou who didst promise till the end  
To be to me what once thou wast?

What thou wert once, forever be;  
When rising on a sunless morn,  
The promise of a better dawn,  
Thy lovely face bent over me.

With song or silence, hand in hand  
Together we have walked since then,  
And when among my fellowmen  
I faltered, thou didst help me stand.

Then strike thy harp to that clear strain  
Of yore, and leave our gay hopes lost  
Leave our illusions tempest crossed  
Sing thy forgotten songs again!

## WHOSO GIVETH A CUP OF WATER

Because I learnt of thee that love is not  
A fruitless blossom to be left to rot  
Upon life's highway, trifled with an hour  
And cast into the dust; because the power  
Of thy kind being, like the sunshine blessed  
My dayspring, O my friend, I leave the rest,  
All careless pleasure and all fancies vain:  
I will not wish the past back once again  
To make thee suffer, as thou surely didst,  
From hour to hour, slow sorrow, in the midst  
Of joys uncertain; but we plucked the rose,  
Then let its perfume, as the night breeze blows  
Drop gently with its petals on the wind,  
God bless the memory thou hast left behind.

## I LOVE THEE

I love thee, yes I love thee now  
More than when thou wert by my side,  
For now my love is passion tried,  
A crown of sorrows on its brow;

And all thou art is grown to me  
Much closer, much more real and true,  
The shadow of a gravestone yew  
Has barred the light that was to be.

A shadow in the noonday sun,  
A sadness in the twilight hour,  
The sudden drooping of a flower  
Whose tender life had but begun.

And yet, another radiance beams,  
A glory on the sleeping worlds,  
As thy fair soul my soul enfolds,  
Grown to one being in my dreams.

I question not the will of God,  
But O the joy that might have been,  
If, without any bar between,  
Life's road together we had trod.

### CARITAS

I did not love my fellow creatures less  
Because of the deep love I had for thee;  
Weak souls shrink passion to their littleness,  
But my strong heart swelled love to charity.  
There are some fragrant things that blow in May  
And all around  
Strew flowers upon the ground:  
Such was the love I bore thee one brief day,  
But time can never take that love away.

### IN THE PINES

If this be love, for thee to draw my breath,  
Joy in thy joy alone to find,  
To feel the chill dark misery of death,—  
Believe I love thee! So the windy pines  
Toss to the mountain shade their unheard song.  
Yet still to thee my lonely soul inclines,  
Yet still I love as I have loved thee long.  
Were every sigh a breeze to waft me to thee  
Were every thought a wing my soul to bear,  
Then as the sunbeams woo the rose, I'd woo thee,  
Radiant and tender as the golden air.  
Soul of my soul that kneeling I adore,  
Nought but my life's oblation can I give:  
I will not die, but I will do much more,  
For thee, O my beloved, I will live.

## SANDS OF THE HOUR-GLASS

### OCTOBER

Another summer vanished, as the fall  
Peers o'er the smoking hill-tops. Gone with all  
The roses and the beauty of the dawn,  
The song of field and wood and river, gone  
Into the everlasting darkness of the past.  
Another summer gone to join the last;  
Another flower fallen from the wreath;  
Another shower of red leaves dropt beneath  
The old men's foot-fall and the children's tread;  
Another summer lying with the dead.  
So with the hopes and glories of the spring.  
Is this my dream? This cold and misty thing  
That stands within the halo of the lamp,  
And on my forehead lays a touch so damp;  
That in the narrow ray thus darkly stands,  
And lays a shrunken hand upon my hands?—  
"I am thy dream of April, violet-crowned,  
I am the song of thrush and robin, drowned  
In whirling winds; the solitude that dwells  
On harvest fields left bare, and naked fells.  
I am the Past. I am the noble fire  
That sparkled in thy torch, the vain desire,  
The sheaf of error and the grain of truth;  
I am thy running glass: I am thy youth."  
Where dost thou point, O Shadow, with thy hand?  
"Unto the grave; a footstep on the sand  
Washed by the coming wave; to leafless trees  
And wintry snows." "What comes to me with  
these?  
What comes? O Shadow of the past, reply!  
"With these, there cometh that which doth not die:  
The Star of Bethlehem, the Christmas hearth,  
The light of Heaven shed upon thy path,  
The garnered harvest of a life well spent;

The Child upon the Mother's knee, the rent  
In glowing skies, and angel choirs that fill  
The heart with peace and blessings and good-will."

### TO EMMA

I find no words, no words to speak to thee  
But didst thou think of carelessness in me,  
Of loving thought less constant than should be  
When heart to heart have beaten answeringly?

Yes, heart to heart. For something knit a band  
Between us while we wandered hand in hand,  
And so,—until the glass have cast its sand,—  
So linked, though parted, you and I shall stand.

If words be needed, O my friend, to say  
"As then I loved thee, still I love today  
And still shall ever," then these words I lay  
Within the green leaves of the holly-spray.

### TO CARMEN SYLVA

Is one who wears a jewel diadem  
And noble mien,  
Who leads the dance before admiring eyes  
And lets men kneel to kiss her mantle's hem,  
Shows she wherein the royal function lies,  
The office of a queen?

Is she who rides beneath an arch of flowers  
While scattered roses brush the horses' hoof,  
Who dwells at ease in screened and scented bowers,  
Beyond the reach of all, from all aloof,  
Is such a one a queen?

Is this a queen, one on a tower alone,  
Unheard, unseen,

Watching the swell of human miseries  
Surge to the footstool of her crimson throne,  
Cold as a star and distant as the skies,  
Answer, is this a queen?

No! Thou hast taught us, Sovereign void of pride,  
O Queen whose thoughts are high, whose hands are  
clean,

Who hast been known to us in doing good,  
That to become a woman glorified  
Into a type of perfect womanhood,  
This is to be a queen.

## LINES

### *Wiesbaden*

This is the place, the dappled sycamore,  
The fan-leaved chestnut and the willow-tree,  
That threw their fading leaves upon our path  
As in these walks we idled long ago,—  
How they remember thee, beloved friend.

## DINANT, ARDENNES

So the still water runs by the still town  
That glasses white-washed walls and leaden roofs  
In the green wave, and towering boulders frown  
Aloft in mid-air, and the sound of hoofs  
Beats on the highway, while the patient mule  
By the long dripping cable drags the weight  
Of river craft. Against some future Yule  
The huge heaped logs come floating down to wait  
In lumber-yards for snow. The piles of coal  
Creep to the bellowing furnace, and the foam  
Caps the swift eddies that arise and roll  
Behind the pleasure boat that steers towards home.  
From time to time across the river breaks  
A wierd fantastic chime. It flutes and shrieks  
In mad refrain, with mediaeval freaks,

And unexpected clang that cracks and shakes.  
A broken litter of metallic chips  
That scatter through the air with leaps and dips  
Lost on the leads and on the passing ships.

### FRIENDSHIP

High hearts are like the harp whose well tuned  
    string  
Vibrates untouched if but another ring;  
Responsive to the thought still undefined  
They read it floating in each other's mind;  
But hover round the one breath of distrust  
And soon the silver chain would fall to rust  
If they did not as quickly catch the strain  
Of confidence and ring in tune again.

### WHY?

Why do we sigh when the last red ray  
    Melts into pale green light;  
Will not to-morrow bring back the day,  
    Will it not dawn as bright?

Why do we sigh when we close a book  
    We had not read before;  
Why cast a sad regretful look,  
    Can we not read it o'er?

Why do we sigh when the eyelids close  
    Over the eyes we love,  
Veiling the realms that no mortal knows,—  
    Shall we not meet above?

Question, question nature's voices  
    If an answer ye would find,  
Or the low discordant noises  
    From the haunts of humankind.

This the mournful muffled ring,  
This the solemn hidden woe  
You must know if you would sing,  
You must suffer if you know.

### A SKETCH

Footsteps on the rustling leaves  
Through the forest stillness sound  
Where the failing sunlight weaves  
Golden lacework on the ground.  
At the sound the squirrel starts  
Curls its quivering bushy tail  
Drops its nibbled nut and darts  
Up a tree whose leaves all pale  
Scatter at its bounding tread.  
Not another sound is heard  
In the grass or overhead;  
Not the soft note of a bird,  
Not a wild note sad or gay,  
To dispel the hazy charm  
Of the mellow Autumn day  
Or break its deep mysterious calm.

### A LETTER (TO M. D.)

Long I watched and waited, my friend, for an answer.

Much was I puzzled your silence to explain.

"Surely" thought I "the tender charms that enhance her

Friendship to me can never be on the wane!

Her image clear—though she float down time's swift river—

Fresh as it gleamed in the welcome of the hearth  
Stands, a statue the winter frost cannot shiver,  
In the wayside shrine of my wandering path.

She remembers the bond of a passing moment  
Pledged in the foaming bumper of golden ale.  
And those blue eyes on the noble ideal so bent  
In recognizing a friend will never fail."  
Such the thought of my heart, and so I said it.  
Then your message came, and I joyfully read it.  
Glad was I to hear of your many delights.  
Making your mock appearance before the lights.  
And whatever be the piece that you play in,  
You will be true to the life, be it light or sage;  
And you will ever be sweet and wise or gay in  
Any part you play on the world's great stage.

### A RAINY EVENING

Gently sad Nature breathes a deep-drawn sigh  
That rustles through the innumerable leaves  
And dies before it meets the leaden sky.  
So still it is, you hear the dripping leaves,  
So sad the dullness of the landscape's tinge  
You gladly turn to where the western light  
Breaks faintly through the overhanging fringe  
Of clouds that do not reach the mountain height:  
Below, a single beam's reflected fire  
Shines from the cross upon a distant spire.

### REQUIESCAT

Weep not, for she at last has found her rest;  
Sigh not, for now that sad and weary breast  
Has ceased to throb with fears and pains and woes;  
Mourn not—her heart is still, with passion's throes  
No longer tortured. Life is long and rough,  
The haven gained. Peace. She has borne enough,  
And bled, and burned, my friends; then let her lie.  
O pity not those who have learned to die!  
Shall we caged birds pity our comrades flown

With wide-spread wings into the wide unknown  
That bounds our little space on every side?  
The host of those of whom we say "They died"  
Encamps about us, follows us through life.  
The murmur of their voices o'er the strife  
Of men arises, awful and sublime,  
And makes us pause in silence while the chime  
Of passing-bells that tells a parting breath  
Tolls in each ear "The next may be thy death."

## LOVE

There is a breath divine upon this earth,  
Leave some to call it by what name they will,  
I still shall call it love. In higher spheres  
Whose light is pure, where mists do not arise  
To cloud the sunshine and to dim the eyes,  
Perhaps they have another truer name  
For this mysterious and sacred thing:  
A name wrought of the ruby's inmost fire  
Or of the scent of half-awakened flowers  
That trembles on the first Spring wind and lives  
Forever in the bosom of the rose;  
As guileless as an infant's wandering gaze,  
And holy as the angel calm that breathe  
The tapers pale, roses and lilies white  
About the snowy death-bed of a maid.  
Some word unnamed save on the lips of those  
Whose hearts are altar-flames before their God;  
Whose thoughts like incense float embalmed to  
    heaven.  
To such alone the name of love is known.  
And as to some the voices of the world  
Weld into floods of rapturous harmony,  
That whispering breeze and bursting cataract,  
And wailing winds across the snow-clad fields,  
The ringing hoof-beats on a dusty road,

And ocean thunders on the rocky shore,  
All blend into a universal song,  
So the pure heart, chastened and passionless  
Sheds upon all a warm enlightening ray,  
A glowing hearth-fire in a happy home,  
A beacon light upon a stormy sea.

## MOUNTAIN BREEZE

When breezes blow, when breezes blow,  
My spirit in me sings,  
It flutters with the dancing leaves  
And bubbles with the springs.

The valley then, the valley then,  
Is far too low for me,  
And to the summit of the hills  
I climb alone and free.

Upon the hills the air is fresh  
The air is fresh and sweet,  
And rivers, meadows, hamlets, trees,  
Lie spread beneath my feet;  
Yet still, yet still unsatisfied,  
I lift my head, and high  
Above the snow-clad mountains rise  
And kiss the sunny sky.

Then climbing on, and climbing on,  
I reach the silent height  
Where nothing smiles beneath the snows  
And men are lost to sight,  
With clouds beneath and sky above,  
And all is ice and light.  
But higher yet, and higher yet,  
Had I the wings to fly,  
Then I would soar beyond the birds  
And plunge into the sky!

## TO ONE ENVIED BY HIS FRIENDS

Smile, happy man, thy fate is kind to thee  
And flings but roses, roses on thy way.  
What is't to them or thee if holding high  
The sheaf of flowers before admiring eyes,  
Unseen thy bleeding fingers grasp but thorns?

## SINTRAM

It is a knell that strikes thine ear,  
And cypress shades of churchyard drear  
Hang over thee: beware!  
But fouler than the phantom Death  
Is thy dark Tempter's whispered breath:  
Then, Christian, have a care!

## IN AFTER YEARS

You answer not. But if, in after-years,  
Through patient labor I should woo you still,  
Until you heard my suit as one who hears  
An idle song he learnt against his will?

What if, in duty done, and battles fought,  
And silence suffered uncomplainingly,  
And living out the lessons that you taught  
I prove at last what you have been to me?

I leave you then, until the day we meet  
With the dim years behind, when I shall lay  
My life-work as a homage at your feet  
And you shall answer me again that day.

## KONIG TOLV

When the moon its zenith reaches  
Over larches, oaks and beeches,  
And its beam in silver breaks  
On the sleeping mountain lakes,  
Lilies at the water brink  
Watch the deer come down to drink,  
Ferns and harebells dashed with dew  
Fairy rounds and pageants view;  
For the gates of Fairyland  
Open at King Tolv's command.  
Hidden deep among the rocks,  
Closed with tiny fairy locks,  
Fairyland's dim gateway lies  
Guarded from all human eyes.  
When the pansies nod and peep,  
Where the heather grows knee-deep,  
Where the mossy boulders piled  
Wave in air their streamers wild;  
Where the bleating flocks are led,  
Where the brawling brooks are fed  
From the bosom of the hills,  
Flowing in a thousand rills  
To the meadows and the main,  
Lie the gates of Tolv's domain.  
But the hunter in the chase  
Never finds their hiding-place  
Though he track the bounding deer  
To his stronghold high and sheer;  
And the shepherd with his flock  
Strolling on from rock to rock  
Through the bracken and the gorse;  
And the rider with his horse  
Wandering in his idle mood  
Through the mountain solitude,  
Seeking early seeking late  
Never spied the hidden gate.

When the moon its zenith reaches  
Over firs and elms and beeches,  
And its light in silver breaks  
On the ripples of the lakes,  
Then the fairy bugles blow  
And the heralds come and go  
To proclaim King Tolv will ride  
Through the world to seek a bride.  
Wide they fling the portals then  
And King Tolv with all his men, —  
Tolv in hunting suit of green  
Gorgeous in the silver sheen  
Of the moonlight's beauty comes,  
While the beetles sound their drums,—  
With his men on steeds of white  
Riding out into the night.

### EPITHALAMIUM

*(To Beatrice)*

Ring out ye crystal wedding bells!  
Ring pure and true  
Through heaven's blue,  
Through clouds above and woods below;  
Ring through the dells  
Where frosty spells  
Chill Autumn's red and purple glow  
Ring through the light  
While we deck out our bride in white.

Ring out ye silver wedding bells!  
The harmony  
Your souls let fly  
At first is soft and very sweet,  
Until it wells  
And floods and swells  
And in an anthem bursts, to greet  
The bride in air!  
Ring while the orange crowns her hair.

Ring out ye golden wedding bells!  
The maidens pale  
Throw back the veil,  
Ring, it is over,—nay begun:  
The midst dispels,  
The vision dwells,—  
Two life-dreams melted into one,  
Gold bells, prolong  
Forevermore your morning song.

### AUSABLE CHASM

Down where the wild cataract leaps,  
Let us walk on the shelving shore,  
By the pool where the eddy sleeps,  
By the plunge and the foam and roar.  
Tread cautiously here on the rock  
That slants down to the fine smooth sands  
And then rises high, block on block  
As if reared by architect's hands.  
How clear and fresh is the river,  
As it bursts from its mountain home  
With a smile and song and shiver,  
Through the still dark ravine to roam!—  
Flows over the broken sandstone,  
Leaps down like a beast from its lair,  
Sprays into diamond strands thrown  
Aloft in the motionless air;  
Creeps down through the gorge deep and dank,  
Its thunder scarce reaching the verge;  
In darkness a moment they sank,—  
In light see the waters emerge.  
Is not this our life, love? Behold  
How it rolls to its sunset of gold.

## IN THE CLOVER

Humming in his heavy flight,  
Soft as velvet in the light  
See the bumble bee alight  
On a blossom tipped with flame,—  
Dragon-flower is its name,  
Given in the children's game,  
For they pinch its yellow jaw  
And behold a dragon's maw.  
See, he tilts it now to draw  
Honey from its parted lip.  
Hear him buzz, and watch him dip  
Down into the cup to sip.  
Rich his brown coat striped with gold,  
Rich the petal's ruddy fold,  
Rich the sunset on the wold.  
Flower in the waving grass,  
If the bumble bee should pass,  
He will drain thy heart alas!

## WHEN THE LEAVES FALL

From the pines the rooks' loud calling  
Echoes through the clear still air  
While the yellow leaves are falling,  
Falling scattered everywhere.  
Down in showers of gold and flame  
To the brown earth whence they came.  
And when next the robins sing,  
And the woods with gladness ring,  
Over them the violets peeping,  
In between the ivy creeping,  
They will never see another spring.

See that fallen oak-tree lying,  
Once the monarch of the wood,

Now its withered trunk is dying,  
Spans its grave where once it stood;  
He who fought the storm so well,  
Bravely fought his last and fell.  
And when next the robins sing  
And the woods with gladness ring,  
Over him the violets peeping  
In between the ivy creeping,  
He will never see another spring.

Not as to the oak-tree riven  
By the angry Autumn blast,  
Not as to the light leaves driven,—  
But the Fall will come at last.  
Darling, when the Summer's flown  
Autumn comes to claim its own.  
Then when next the robins sing  
And the woods with gladness ring,—  
On my grave the violets peeping,  
In between the ivy creeping,  
Shall I somewhere see another Spring?

### "SUFFERING BEFORE YOU SING"

*F. R. Havergal*

Do you ask if poets learn  
All their songs in schools of woe  
If with their own tears they earn  
Their sweet verses' golden flow?

Ask the echoes, sadly dying  
Why they answer not in song,  
Ask the west wind softly sighing  
Why it laughs not, loud and long.

Questioner, ask thine own heart why it sighs,  
Why we fly to the grave so fast,  
Why gold on the Autumn and sunset lies,—  
Ask why we cherish and weep o'er the past.

### AUTUMN WIND

Tear on, thou Autumn wind, tear madly on,  
Bear down the trembling year to a grave of snow;  
The blooms of yesterday long since are gone  
Where these must go:  
Mad wind, rush on, and sweep the yellow leaves  
To heaps of rust,  
And pile the dust  
On Summer's head, the while a vapour weaves  
A pall for glories of the ebbing day.  
Oh! give me thy wild wings or bear me too away!

### NEW YEAR

So, bear the rest away!  
Let the dull year fret down into the grave.  
The joy you gave,  
O fleeting season, fling along the way  
Like faded flowers; and let the waning ray  
Break its red shaft upon the ebbing wave.  
Let the last shaft break on the restless sea  
And this sad day,  
Sink into slumber. How the New Year laughed  
When she was here! Alas, our lips have quaffed  
A bitter cup since first the morning gay  
Jangled its bells. The snow is falling; may  
Its winding sheet conceal the past from me.

So falls the snow upon the pointed spires  
That throw into the air

The Year's first welcome, waking everywhere  
A hope, a sorrow or the smouldering fires  
In ashes of unsatisfied desires.

So fall the flakes upon the frozen wolds  
And fences of forsaken folds,  
    On silvered rills,  
And dim and misty hills,  
And ivied battlements of ruined holds.

So falls the level sheet upon the lane  
Where first we wandered in the Autumn rain,  
'Mid whirling showers of red and yellow leaves;  
So its cold shroud the snowflake weaves  
Upon the landscape that we loved; so drops  
The blessing of the snow upon the eaves  
Of that wide roof beneath the naked tops  
Of ancient elms,  
This New Year morn,  
Where, with another's hand and eye in yours,  
You count the chime that pours  
Like an echo from above,  
Like the lips that whisper love,  
Into your ears the joy that overwhelms  
The future with the glory of the dawn.

### A HOLLY-WREATH

Here's to the absent host  
And hostess, a Christmas toast:  
Good health and cheer  
Through all the year  
To those we love the most!

(Waits singing outside)  
"While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground,

The angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around."

Foam on the goblet's brim  
And green round the mirror's rim  
Blaze on the grate,—  
The hour is late  
Ah, listen, the Christmas hymn!

(Waits)

"Fear not, said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind,  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind."

Often those notes arose  
From younger voices, while those  
Whose faces still  
Our memory fill  
Tramped out across the snows.

(Waits)

"To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
A Saviour who is Christ the Lord  
And this shall be the sign."

Some sleep and some are far,  
And I know not where they are,  
But far or near,  
Their faces here  
Shine like the Bethlehem Star.

(Waits)

"The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed,  
All meanly wrapp'd in swathing bands  
And in a manger laid."

Kindest of friends whose roof  
In sheltering gave us proof  
Of thoughtful love,  
Would we could prove  
Sound weave, through warp and woof.

(Waits)

"Thus spake the Seraph and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God, who thus  
Addressed their joyful song."

Sound weave, without a tear,  
Be a robe for you to wear,  
Of love's own dye.  
Would God on high  
Should bless you through our prayer.

(Waits)

"All glory be to God on high  
And on the earth be peace.  
Good will henceforth from heaven to men  
Begin and never cease."

Listen, the aged guest  
By the fireside sings his best;  
All swell the chord  
Of the ivory board  
And the bells are chiming the rest.

### HENCEFORTH (TO S. B. C.)

*On the death of William McKinley*

The Nation's dirge prolongs its mournful note  
For the loved chief, struck by a murderer's hand:  
The tide hath washed away the name she wrote  
Upon the sand.

But to the Nation's grief a solemn Shade  
Speaks from the distance of a crystal star:  
"Peace, for the lamentations thou hast made  
My peace doth mar.

I love thee still as when a living man  
In this mysterious radiance of the dawn,  
And I must suffer as a spirit can  
To see thee mourn.

For thee I lost to some the name of friend,  
Grown deaf to any other but thy call,  
And sternly fought the fight that hath an end  
Beneath this pall.

For thee I had unlearned the name of home,  
Content to dwell beneath a roof of thine,  
And share the cup that gave my lips the foam,  
Thy lips the wine.

I have maintained thy laws, upheld thy right,  
Brought wisdom to thy counsels, drawn the sword  
To shield thine honour, hung its shining light  
Before the Lord.

For above all I held thine honour dear.  
I trimmed, not lit the lamp; and when it burned,  
To the Ordainer who had sent me here  
Calmly returned.

Yet I as others loved the glorious world,  
The glint and sheen of sunlight on the trees,  
The white and crimson and the stars unfurled  
Upon the breeze;

The song of waking birds, the haunts of men,  
The flowers of the Spring, and when they die,  
When parting splendours flame upon the glen,  
The swallow's cry.

I felt within my veins the tide of life,  
The hearty throb that answers to the touch  
Of all that makes life dear to us. The strife  
With the death-clutch  
Fell on me suddenly, while thine applause

Rang in mine ear;—only a little while,—  
And I who lived obedient to Heaven's laws  
Died with a smile.

Henceforth there is a crown laid up for me  
Which thine own hand shall place upon my tomb,  
And to thy heart my memory shall be  
Light in the gloom.

But here, where on my path to earthly view  
The dark impenetrable portals close,  
Tell all these little children not to strew

A fading rose;  
Nay, bind a sheaf, ripe in the golden ear  
Where ye shall lay me down beneath the sod,  
To teach them that a good man's way is clear  
Back to his God.

And that the labour which I have begun  
Led on from man to man, shall reach the goal,  
Led on from man to man, from sun to sun,  
From soul to soul."

## IN MEMORIAM

*(On the anniversary of the death of William McKinley.)*

Come while a smile on the lip of September  
Lights her farewell to the blossom-crowned days;  
Kindle the altar flame from its cold ember,  
Scatter above him the roses and bays;

Wind him a wreath that shall blazon his story,  
Roses, love-scented, that fade in their bloom,  
Bays that betoken the statesman's true glory  
Shed from the Capitol onto the tomb.

Head of the State in a moment of peril,  
His was a figure that looms in a land

Till the great flood with its water of beryl  
Sweeps victor and vanquished like shells on the sand.

Grave and intent at the helm of the nation  
When a new world opened up on our sight,  
Simple in life as exalted in station,  
Faithful to duty and true to the right,

Forward, still forward he led, with his eyes on  
Gleams of a future that rose in the West,  
Guiding the Ship to a broader horizon,  
Proving her worthy to vie with the rest.

Nothing is dead while these memories linger,  
Star of an epoch though set in our sky:  
History writes with unwavering finger  
"Pause at this monument ye who pass by."

### THE SONG OF THE DIAL

The sun-dial said to the rambler rose:  
"With every bird that swings  
You bend, and with every wind that blows  
Your petals fly like wings.  
Into your cup the gold bee will dart,  
All pollen-splashed and dim,  
What throbs in you when your inmost heart  
You unfold unto him?  
What sighs in the tale you often tell  
When stars glow from the deep  
Like pebbles down in a sapphire well,  
And the birds fall asleep?  
There must be joy in a soul that pours  
Such laughter on the day.  
I wish that happiness like yours  
Could chase my gloom away;  
Could chase the shadow laid by time  
Upon this iron face,

Could there a merrier jingle rhyme  
And brighter letters trace!  
But I must watch till the dawn comes up,  
Send laborers to their task,  
Tell this one to doze and this to sup,  
For that is all they ask.  
The creeping line on my wide bronze disk  
As inch by inch it moves  
Is lonelier than an obelisk  
In its centennial grooves.  
What would I not give one glorious hour  
To be a rose like you,  
And dance with the passing breeze and shower  
My petals in the dew.  
To lift but a moment the hand of time,  
Dull as a friar's hood,  
And be a red-rambler in its prime  
Till Autumn fires the wood!"

"Your mission", answered the Rambler-rose,  
"Is higher far than mine.  
I sorrow to see you one of those  
Who grumble and repine.  
For patient sages have bowed to learn  
The lesson that you teach,  
And what you bring round to all in turn  
Is God's own gift to each.  
God's gift in His wisdom and His time,  
Measure of joy or grief,  
The burial-toll, the wedding chime,  
The budding and the leaf.  
That shadow upon your disk of bronze  
Has its majestic grace,  
Not softer move the fern's light fronds  
In their appointed place;  
Nor deeper plunge on a summer noon  
Into unfathomed blue

The flight of clouds and the faded moon  
Than drops a glance on you.  
Records of ages your silence fill,  
Like the boom of the shore,  
Your motionless, hard-limned features thrill  
With visions of yore,  
And graven in iron with none but a shade  
Ever stirring your soul,  
You follow the law of the Worker, who made  
Yonder stars as they roll."

## NIGHT IN THE GARDEN

My walks are strange at night. The daisies stand  
Transparent cups of fire, while hand in hand  
Angels will sway them with their finger-tips,  
And bend the round, white bowl to touch their lips.  
The poppies scatter to the weary moon  
Their petals, red and white and rose at noon,  
Now burnt out with the day to drifting ashes,  
That float like dreams with golden shoes and sashes  
Along the aisles of slumber. Magic night  
Lies in the garden. Wings that hide their flight  
Beat the still air, and stars, sharp jewelled blooms,  
Tip the black spruce that like a sexton looms,  
Bearing his mace in hand, the moonlit shaft  
Silvered with running sap. Just now they laughed  
Among the shrubs; I could not catch a sight  
Of any there. They laughed. Mysterious night  
Brushes the gravel with her garment's hem  
And bows the stately fox-glove on its stem.  
Is this the dial, this fretted pile of snow  
Capped with a blinking disk? I hardly know.  
What wizard finger laid a sparkling net  
Of rays across it like a cobweb? Yet  
The style marks not the hours as soft they steal  
Into the past. A distant mirror's gleam,  
Or the reflection of a summer stream

So seems the light, dim, fanciful, unreal.  
Even the corn-field seems to melt and flow  
And drip and ripple with the lambent glow;  
While dark as death-plumes in the orchard lie  
The shadows; and a rustle stirs the rye.

## NIENTE

Nought hast thou done. What answer to the world,  
What answer canst thou give?  
Altho thy heart should bleed, the spear is hurled,—  
What right hast thou to live?

Nought hast thou done. Though pride should swell  
and break  
The moorings of thy soul,  
These are but eddies of a rock-bound lake  
That restless fret and roll.

Nought hast thou done. The purpose of the day  
Turned back and set at noon;  
The butterfly was withered as it lay  
Cradled in the cocoon.

Nought hast thou done. Thy fancies melt in air;  
No work of beauty stands  
To show the crowd how pure and lofty were  
The labours of thy hands.

Nought hast thou done. No tablet shall proclaim  
Thy merits from the dead,  
No gilded lettering adorn thy name;  
No laurel crown thy head.

Nought hast thou done. O lonely night forlorn,  
Wasted with barren tears,  
While thou awaitest an ungracious dawn  
And unrewarded years.

## TO A POET

Will you speak as a fool in the ears of a listening  
World?

Will you pipe to a reed that is dead when the gust is  
still?

Or gather the blush of a dew-laden blossom unfurled,  
Or like the Danaïdes, take a seive to hold the rill?

Are there not birds in the cover that chirp to the  
sun;

Breaths in the corn field, the sob and the rush of the  
wind?

You who can sing, you have left your great duty un-  
done;

In your wasted hours and your idle songs, you have  
sinned.

For shame! Are the fancies of pagans your favorite  
theme?

Is the silver front of Astarte your dream of the  
moon;

Does an Aphrodite's breast of stone cast a magic  
gleam

Athwart the laurel shade where falter the roses of  
June?

It is long since the strain of the Mantuan voiced a  
feeling,

It is ages since Hercules span at Omphale's feet,  
And since old Silenus, or the wild Bacchante's reel-  
ing

Stood poised in the bronze as they flashed in the  
scenes of the street.

Strike nearer home, for they say that the poets are dy-  
ing,

You trifle with words, and your calling abase to a  
game.  
Interpret the soul of the people, the sinning and buy-  
ing  
And selling and toiling, forever, forever the same.

## SNOW

Over the marble stair, mantles the snow, chill as the  
dying year,  
Soft as the sunborn cloud, pale as the glow set on a  
twilight mere.  
Ermine royal and flecked ruthlessly soon, lilies and  
foam no more  
Here on the frozen steps vie with the moon, decking  
a princely door.  
Some one has trod and passed; footsteps will light,  
some one has climbed the stair,  
Laid little footprints up, all the long flight, into the  
hallway glare.  
Ermine royal and flecked ruthlessly soon, lilies and  
foam no more  
Here on the frozen steps vie with the moon, decking  
a princely door.

## AT A CONCERT

Sing you in English "Canzoni" of Florence?  
Chill you their wings in your snow-laden air?  
Glint of the olive and gloam of the torrents,  
Ah! you profane them by all that is fair!  
Out on the tenor who mangles our ballads,  
Rips them to tatters like hail on the vine,  
Harken when Beppo is weeding his salads,  
Planting his artichokes out in a line.  
Under the hills that look south of Fiesole  
Threads of spun crystal slant down through the  
trees,

And a Madonna beams, placid and holy,  
On the low terraces swept by the breeze;  
Here Beppo sings when a delicate splendor  
Flushes the Apennine, paling the moon,  
Here Beppo's voice goes up, thrilling and tender,  
Light as the gondolas on the lagoon.  
Laugh, and it laughs with you, nodding carnation,  
Flame in the sunlight and spice in the air,  
Weep, and it weeps with you, sob of a nation,  
Bearing the weight if a wordless despair.  
Sing you in English the ballads of Beppo,  
Trick you them out in the tongue that you speak?  
So might a beauty of Fez or Aleppo  
Mince in high heels with a patch on her cheek.

### ON A READING OF OMAR KHAYYAM

In what groves of oleander,  
By what fountain's polished rim,  
On the shores of what Meander  
Did you learn that Persian hymn?  
Scent of orange, fragrant spices,  
Breath of spikenard and of myrrh,  
Beds of lilies, star devices  
On the horizons of Ur;  
Cup of the supreme libation,  
Ruby legend of the grape,  
Palm-girt cradle of the nation  
That has given the world its shape;—  
As you read the vision lingers,  
Like a peri's crimson scarf,  
Fluttering between her fingers,  
Shaken by her wondrous laugh.  
Morning touched the East and woke her  
On the mountains of Iran,  
And the desert's sea of ochre  
Tossed about the caravan.  
Westward then the wise men wander

Till the rising of the Star.  
Poet of the East, look yonder,  
Leap the garden wall, Omar!  
For your idle satisfaction  
In the sunshine and the bowl  
Is a deadening of action  
And a missing of the goal.  
There are odors in the roses  
That are shaken by the rain,  
There are glories life discloses  
Only in an hour of pain.  
Science of the disenchanted,  
Broken pitcher of the dead,  
Why uproot the rose you planted,  
Why unsay the words you said?  
There is more, O Zoroaster,  
Then the eternal light and shade,  
The initials of the Master  
Are upon the pots He made.

UNDER THE ROYAL BANNERS



## REQUIEM

They twine the festive wreath  
About the hearth and shrine, while he lies dead  
In his fair prime, beneath  
The sod, with hemlock on his lonely bed.  
Thou whose Word called to him  
And left us here bereft and sorrowing,  
Father, receive our hymn,  
And shield us with Thine everlasting wing.

Rise, shine, behold Thy Star!  
Pour in our hearts the love that is in heaven.  
The faith that all things are  
In tenderness bestowed, in mercy given.  
We said: "Thy will be done,"  
Then shall we pause because it is Thy will  
That early this Thy son  
Should worship Thee upon Thy Holy Hill?  
Over his boyish brow  
Has dawned a ray of the eternal light;

Great Father, hear us now:  
We joy that he is standing in Thy sight.  
We prayed: "Keep him from ill,"  
And Thou hast deigned to take him by the hand  
Across death's river, still  
Hopeful, and strong, to join Thy glorious band.  
O closer, closer yet  
Earth's veils all riven he draws to us and Thee;  
Yea, holy Father, let  
His spirit guide us to eternity.

## RECESSIONAL

The crimson and the green, a garland maze  
Still hang above the illumined Mother-Maid,  
While rich wood perfumes mingle in the shade  
And the clear hymn joins with the organ praise:  
"From out the forest stealing," nun arrayed  
"The night her mantle throws,"—earth's visions  
fade.

"O'er all our care and yearning," wails the phrase,  
"Our bitter pains and woes"—The voices raise  
Dim spirits from the pictures of stained glass,  
In wintry twilight slowly darkening,  
As the Recessional rolls on. Alas!  
So moves the long march to the grave, a string  
Of choristers. The organ fails. They pass  
The vestry door, and still we hear them sing.

*Church of the Incarnation, Jan. 12, 1908.*

## IN MEMORIAM

*All Saints Day, Nov. 1, 1908*

The organ voice restored now fills the vault  
In grand memorial anthem to the souls  
Enlisted in the armies of the Lord.  
Saints, saints, whose lives have been a sacrifice  
And on whose brows was graven "Holiness."  
They stand in glory, radiant with the light  
That issues from their Captain's eye serene,  
And victory and joy is in their cry.  
While harmony threads the hearts deep recess,  
Our alleluias mingle with the strains  
Of earthly music and of heavenly song.  
Hear us in Thine eternal dwelling-place:  
We dedicate ourselves to follow them  
Whose steps have trod the impress of Thy feet.

Oh call us each by name, and let us see  
The glory of Thine open countenance.

*On the restoration of the Organ of The House  
of Prayer, In Memory of my brother.*

### SONNET

I scarcely now begin to sing again,  
For when the sudden lightning of thy death  
Silenced my voice, I gazed with bated breath  
Upon the stormy skies and long in vain,  
Or struck upon the lyre a feeble strain  
As low in drought a river murmureth:  
Failing the wrapt Elijah, Scripture saith  
Cherith ran dry amid the parching grain;  
Yet the despairing Prophet felt the thrill  
Of angel touch that bade him rise and bless  
His God for heavenly bread upon the coals  
And brimming cruse. So did I suffer till  
I saw the Vision in the wilderness  
And heard the Voice not heard in thunder rolls.

### EASTER FLOWERS

*(To Rev. J. S. Miller)*

The Angel of the Tomb, at dawn  
Stood on the Altar steps, and blazed  
In the dim twilight. To adorn  
The sanctuary, the Angel gazed  
With saddened eyes for vernal bloom  
Such as should mark the holy Feast;  
But none were there. Then through the gloom  
Three women came with flowers.

“Though least  
Among the Lord’s redeemed, we bring  
These blossoms, watered with our tears

Meet for a Paschal offering  
And cherished amid hopes and fears."  
Through folds of a translucent vest  
The Angel's form showed beautiful;  
His sandalled foot, a star that blest  
The floor's clear dyed mosaic. Full  
Upon the speaker looked he. Low  
He spoke, and closely scanned her face:  
"Whence comes thy flower, that I may know  
If it be worthy of this place?"  
The woman answered: "Few will mark  
My flower; it is a humble thing,  
And yet the carol of a lark  
Was sung to it on joyful wing.  
Pearl of the meadow, daisy small,  
So lowly, scarce it has to stoop  
Beneath the tread, and blushed with all  
The careless tramp of men that troop  
Across the sod, immaculate  
It keeps its alabaster crown  
And heart of gold. I conquered late  
A spirit proud and laid it down  
Before the Cross these forty days.  
Lo, where it lay, the blossom clove  
The fostering soil, rayed with His praise  
And meekly glowing with His love."  
"At yonder gate of life,  
The font, thy blossom lay, to blow  
In peace," the Angel said, "Through strife  
Of good and evil here below."  
Lilies the second woman brought;  
Their cup with brimming radiance white  
Beamed like the Chalice richly wrought  
That glows with Eucharistic light:  
"Even as my heart within me burned,  
A throbbing ruby, full of love  
And full of pain, I bowed and turned

To yonder Cross, and battling strove  
To chasten mortal yearning, torn  
With fitful passion, till I wrung  
Renunciation, heaven-born,  
From earthly pangs, and victor, strung  
Upon His crown another gem."  
Thus spoke she, "And where'er a tear  
Had fallen; a lily diadem  
Circled the Cross." "Such flowers are dear  
To Him who knew temptation. See,"  
The Angel said, "'mid incense smoke  
They shall proclaim His purity  
In sight of all." The last one spoke  
In this wise: "Scarce I dare to bring  
At the solemn close of Lent,  
This my Easter offering.  
On the Master's errands bent  
Little could I pause to grow,  
Hardly could I plough or sow,  
For I tend the Master's sheep.  
But the Master surely said,  
Ere He hung upon the Tree:  
'Ye who break a piece of bread  
With the needy, break with Me.'  
Flowers have I none to bring,  
Yet my basket thus I lay  
On the footstool of my King,  
Broken bread He blest alway."  
Lowly on the Altar stair  
Knelt she, and a tender smile  
Wreathed the Angel's features: where  
Bread had been, no bread was there;  
And a wondrous scent the while  
From fresh violets was cast.  
"Thee," saith he, "the Lord doth greet;  
These shall bloom while Heaven doth last  
From this hour, at Jesus' feet."

## WHILE THESE HUNGER

A loaf of bread from the baker's cart  
Fell on the frozen ground:  
It lay unnoticed and apart,  
By not a beggar found.

On virgin snow free from mire and soot,  
At the crossing it lay,  
Till one trampled it underfoot  
As he sped on his way.

And thus a sacred loaf of bread,  
Christ's own mysterious token,  
By which His poor might have been fed,  
Was trod on and broken.

## SAUL OF TARSUS

Down from the Temple heights and through the  
streets  
Which saw the daily ministry, he passed,  
Breathing out threatenings against the Church.  
He looked upon the Temple's goodly pile,  
The graceful columns of the outer close,  
The flights of stairs that led into the gate  
And to the brazen altar, and beyond,  
To the high porch before the sanctuary.  
His heart was moved to fury as he thought  
How but a few deluded fishermen  
And publicans, and ploughmen from the fields  
Had stirred a wind that blowing might subvert  
The doctrine of Gamaliel—overthrow  
Once more God's worship on His Holy Mount.  
Thus should the veined and fretted wealth of stone,  
The molten glory of the golden vine,  
The glittering plate of that old ritual,

Which Moses taught, fall into plunderers' hands;  
Offended God again would hide His Face,  
The flames devour the gates and broken wall;  
Amid a growth of overrunning weeds  
The fox should prowl about the Levite's court. . . .  
"Rather than this, I pray Thee, give me strength  
And I will slay the men who undermine  
Thy worship even as Samson fell of old  
On the Philistines. Now, defend Thy Name,  
Thou who didst lead Thy people through the sea!"  
The noonday sun fell hot upon the road:  
Damascus showed afar, with shady palms  
And gardens crowned, and girded with her hills;  
But Saul would fain have spanned the interval  
To seek the elders and display the scroll  
That he might bind the followers of Christ.  
For to the High Priest in Jerusalem,  
Demented with his zeal, he had declared,  
"Give me the letters granting power to slay;  
I shall confound the fiercest, as the wolf  
Pursues his prey, so shall I hunt them down."  
Then while he walked, the sudden blinding light  
That left him stunned and prostrate on the ground.  
Converted in the lurid flash, called forth  
To be in instrument of signal grace,  
He has not lifted from the Holy Book  
The veil that hid that sight from other eyes.  
What had performed the wondrous miracle?  
What apparition stayed his upraised arm?  
It was the Face that martyred Stephen saw,  
When kneeled he dying and besought, "Lay not  
This sin unto their charge." It was the Face  
That those three children in the furnace flame  
Beheld, and walked unscathed. It was the Face  
That radiant beamed above the Colosseum  
When bleeding from the brutal Roman games  
The Christians stood ringed with their murderers;

The Face that meets the soldier's failing eye  
Upon lost battlefields where right is slain.  
The Face that Francis in his chapel vowed  
To stamp into his soul; that brush and chisel  
Through later ages have essayed to trace,  
And striving, have bequeathed from time to time  
Fair distant semblance of divinity  
On taper-lighted reredos and wall;  
That gazing on Bar-Jonas contrite moaned,  
"I love Thee, and Thou knowest, Lord, I love;"  
That Magdalen in the unfolding dawn  
Knew and cried out, adoring, "Rabboni!"  
He saw the Vision that has cheered the dark  
Of the death valley to devoted men,  
And won the quivering brows of agony  
To ecstasy in torture and despair.  
Then taking up the banner of the Cross,  
He bore it on to conquer all the world.

### THE LITTLE CHRIST-CHILD

The little Christ-Child with bare feet  
Walks through the winter snow.  
Along the dark and chilly street;  
Christ-Child, where dost thou go,  
O Christ, where dost thou go?

"I go this blessed night to see  
My people poor and sad,  
And learn whose loving charity  
Hath wrought to make them glad,  
To cheer and make them glad."

Lo, as Thou passest, roses blow,  
O Christ-Child, on the ground;  
Thus walking through the Christmas snow,  
Say, Child, what hast Thou found,  
What deeds of mercy found?

"A woman sat beside a fire  
That loving hands had lit,  
And round about, mine angel choir  
Left song to blow on it,  
To blow and kindle it.

A table with good cheer was spread  
Where cheer is seldom seen,  
And the bright lamp that hung o'erhead  
Was hung with holly green:  
Love twined the holly green.

And once a child as frail as I  
Lay on a bed of pain;  
The voice that bid it easy lie  
Did sing a carol strain  
A low sweet carol strain.

Yet find I sorrow want and woe  
At each step on the way.  
The burdens I have borne below  
Share thou this Christmas Day,  
This blessed Christmas Day."

## A CHRISTMAS HYMN

(*Christmas 1891*) *London*

*"Glory to God in the Highest  
And on Earth peace, good will towards Men"*

---

Snow lies upon the moonlit mount  
And ice upon the silent fount,  
A smoky breath wreaths the cold oxen's stall;  
A distant call  
Rings through the night  
Where shepherds watch their flocks upon the height.

Silence lies spread with angel wings  
Upon the face of earthly things  
On starry choirs and nature's voice sublime ;  
    Their ordered chime  
    Hushed for a time  
Waits the glad sound the Herald's message brings.

As in the tempest of Heaven's war  
The fire-plumed Michael seen afar  
Parted the many millioned ranks of light  
    To left and right,  
    A presence clove  
The thronged skies, Behold the star of Love.

Oft the grey hills in evening wrapt  
Or dreaming seas in silence lapt,  
Wake to serener beauty, as the moon  
    Risen, looks down  
    From cloudy oceans pearled  
And shedding streams of peace, transfigures the dark  
    world ;

Yet more than heart has holiest known  
When gazing, pure and mighty grown,  
On heaven's vast peace and earth's illumined sleep,  
    More vast, more deep  
    A hallowed spell  
From the great Angel's wide spread pinions fell.

Silent, he steered his level flight  
Till o'er an inn his beacon light  
He lit, a cresset hanging in the sky :  
    Forthwith a signal cry,  
    To hell's confine,  
Announced the birth of Mary's Son divine.

Lo, at the sound a radiant throng  
Dimming the moon, with triumph song  
Sweeps the wide plain, from heaven's effulgent walls  
    A glory falls  
    In shafts of gold,  
As sunlight streams from clouds where thunder  
    rolled.

And now the Seraph, earthward bound  
Closed his six wings: with twain he crowned  
His head, and twain a jewelled girdle lie  
    Upon his thigh,  
    And twain most fleet,  
Gold sandals, shod with lightning speed his feet.

His mighty frame of purest mold,  
Flaming beneath his garment's fold  
Through its translucent vest, with orient glow  
    Beams on the snow,  
    And as he passes, there  
Fragrance of heavenly flowers fills the air:

Anon, with look and word benign,  
He shows the wondering herds the sign  
Where cherubs without number float unseen,  
    A tender screen  
    To shield the Child  
From breath of earth and His young Mother mild:

"Hail, Saviour born, for Thou alone  
Art holy; Hail, for thou alone  
O Thou Most High, art worthily adored  
    Thou only art the Lord."  
    Him thus the angel crowd  
Proclaimed, in lowest adoration bowed.

## VESPERS

(*Mentor, Ohio, 1905*)

Many daisies have picked I in summer meadows,  
When the yellow wealth of harvest filled the hollow  
    of the hill,  
When the noonday light was checked with pleasant  
    shadows  
Here and there upon the hay-field, and the woods  
    were hot and still.

And the summer of its beauty I have plundered  
As I walked about the treasure house that opens to  
    us all,  
Often joying, wrapt in silence, I have wondered  
How the Hand that shaped these frail things wrote  
    upon Belshazzar's wall.

Once, as thus I mused, I fancied I was lifted  
To the smokeless Alpine regions where the heavens  
    stand ajar,  
And roses that appear when the mists are rifted,  
Bright with spray dashed from the waterfall, root  
    in the crannied spar.

Far below a village lay, sunk in the gloaming,  
Road and spire and inn had slipped away like gar-  
    ments dropt at night,  
And the rumble of the torrent and its foaming  
Were nothing more than a murmur and a phantom  
    from that height.

Rising damp that bathes the iris by the river  
Threw a trailing scarf of greyest gauze about the  
    mountain base,  
And I felt the lonely wonder with a shiver,

Like the Israelites who shunned to look their leader  
in the face,  
When he bore the stone law down the path that he  
trod,  
And his countenance dazzled because he had spoken  
with God.

For suddenly I saw with other eyes  
The daisy in my hand,  
Beautiful, strange, and full of memories,  
As a pale shell upon the sand,  
That will brim with a drop of the ocean, yet mirror  
the skies.

It took me back to Grison's upland stretch  
Where bees go humming through the scanty vetch;  
This was no flower of the drowzy plain,  
Was I not in the Engadine again?  
The fragrant upland vale where every rill  
That feeds the fresh hued grass is clear as air  
In August noon. All things are sparkling there:  
The pasture smells of lilies, and the hill  
Tinkles with cow-bells, musical as chimes  
From fretted steeples. Thus, to him who climbs  
Albula once, a daisy may recall  
The mountains, pine and crag and waterfall  
And glacier. Never elsewhere have I seen  
White petals with so wonderful a sheen,  
The alabaster of the Engadine.  
And thus you bear us upward to the height,  
With simple words, to clearer, purer light.  
While the old Tale, so old and so well known,  
Grows young and new, for round it you have thrown  
A life, a glow and a color of your own.  
We see the desert. We see a caravan  
In the wake of a star;  
Angels across the dark throw a silver span  
Like the moonlit bar

Upon a sleeping sea, when the sails are slack  
And the low wave laps,  
And the sailor's dream in his hammock wings far  
back

To his home perhaps. . . .  
Behold the gifts of garden and mine piled up  
In the lap of a stranger,  
Who lays her child, a pearl in a monarch's cup,  
On the straw of a manger;  
We join in the strain of the angelic song  
At Emmanuel's birth;  
For a Leader has risen to right the wrong;  
And, henceforth, "Peace on Earth";  
Peace, His peace: you pray, to men of honest will.  
His peace be with you. Still,  
As we disperse, there lingers throughout the air  
The perfume of that prayer.  
God bless you for painting the missal of old  
With crimson and with gold.

### FIAT

Thou hast allowed me half the mortal span,  
The rest is thine. I do not strive or cry,  
Nor shall my voice be heard; I lived a man,  
And as I lived, I do not fear to die.  
A lonely grave e'en here will not hide all  
Of what has breathed within this mortal form.  
Where it has stood the oak bows to its fall;  
As it spread sail, the ship has met the storm.  
Though shattered timbers and a floating spar  
Wash to the shore before tomorrow's dawn,  
My name is written where thy records are  
And I am going where thy sons are gone.  
I do not question where. It is enough.  
Thy breath went forth to fashion me. Thy breath  
Recalls and I obey. Through smooth or rough,  
I tread the homeward way that men call death.

## SILOAM

Our Lord was gracious and no bitterness  
Mixed with His teaching. This hard punishment  
You speak of from your pulpit, and still less  
Your maudlin "expiation", never lent  
Their color to His doctrine. Calm and clear  
The mighty words dropt healing from His lips:  
"I came to save and bless and banish fear."

He knew not of the scorpions and the whips  
With which you arm his angels.

Rumor spread

Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice  
The blood of Galileans.(1) Some were led  
To think the sudden slaughter should suffice  
As proof of sin deserving such a blow  
At Heaven's hand. So judged they those eighteen  
Whom with it's fall Siloam's tower laid low.  
Siloam (Shiloah) also was the scene  
Of Jesus' healing him who from his birth  
Had not beheld the Sun. He said "I am",  
Whereat in madness they took up from earth  
Stones, but He passed them. Surging at the dam,  
The swollen current of relentless hate  
Circled and sank around Him. So he passed,  
And noted one who by the Temple gate  
With sightless eyes sat begging.(2) Jesus cast  
A look of pity. Such He came to save.  
"Behold, I am the light", He touched with clay  
The beggar's eyes: "Wash in Siloam's wave".  
The man obeyed, and he was whole straightway.  
Thus the same word Shilóah brings to mind

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(1) Luke xiii. 4. (2) John ix. 2.

"Siloam: Sent is an admissible interpretation; but the original meaning is rather sending. St. John sees in the word *nomen et omen*.—Bishop Perowne.

Delivered twice. They asked whose sin the rod  
Deserved, the parent's or the child's that blind  
He entered life: "Nor his nor theirs, but God  
Willed through his lips here to be glorified.  
Work, work while there is light. Seek not the sin  
But God's own righteousness", the Lord replied.  
"Judge not the judgment nor the life within,  
Hidden from sight beyond your narrow ken,  
Nor deem those evil beyond other men  
On whom the tower fell and Pilate's sword.  
Keep watch upon yourselves". Thus said the Lord.

## HAND AND BRAIN

*"The Sons of Mary seldom bother, for they have in-  
herited that good part,  
But the Sons of Martha favor their Mother of the  
careful soul and the troubled heart;  
And because she lost her temper once, and because  
she was rude to the Lord, her Guest,  
Her Sons must wait upon Mary's Sons—World  
without end, reprieve, or rest."  
(Rudyard Kipling.)*

If you believe in the Gospel Story, and do not make  
it a forceful myth,  
Writing your verses for empty glory, robbing the  
narrative of its pith;  
If you believe in the Master's kindness, ready to see  
as the Master sees,  
And do not share in the High Priests' blindness, nor  
in the pride of the Pharisees,

Burn no incense to any idol, open the Book at another page.

The Lord never encouraged the idle and worked  
hard in the strength of His age.

Where the want was, His hand was ready, where  
the work was awaiting His days were spent;  
And the blow was never unsteady that He aimed in  
His wrath at self-content.

Let not your large heart, Kipling, bewilder, but keep  
your eye on the larger hope.

Let not the ship's captain scorn the builder, nor the  
pilot the man at the rope.

To girder and derrick be honor given, to tunnel and  
bridge their lawful place;

The factory may bring us nearer heaven, by teaching  
the love of a brother's face.

Yet is there good but in hard labor? Friend, is there  
use but in crow-bar and pike?

Had they skill but in fife and tabor, those who have  
taught how the fighters should strike?

Nay! Dignity comes of a task well done in tailor's  
cloth or in overalls,

And the duty lies upon every one to trim his lamp  
ere the Bridegroom calls.

Sons of Martha and Sons of Mary who honestly  
work while you have the light,

Even in this world the Lord is not chary of his  
rewards in your fellows' sight.

If carpeted ease be the goal to win, electric bulbs on  
a paneled wall,

Those who have won have the greater sin, and earth  
has no recompense at all.

Turn from the feast where Dives carouses, do not  
stand staring at shaken reeds;

Men finely clad are in rich men's houses, not where  
the foot-weary Saviour leads.

There's a better part, it is no fiction; Jesus said these  
words in solemn truth,

When the shadow of the crucifixion loomed across  
the visions of His youth.

Or if your cry be the disproportion between the task  
of the hand and brain,  
The idle thinker is an abortion—the brutal butcher a  
thing as vain.  
Jesus said not “Martha, lo you labor, and your service counts to me for naught”.  
But, “You trouble, and behold your neighbour listens to the word the wise have sought”.

He condemned not Martha’s sons in anger who forgave his murderers in death;  
Laid no burden on their souls in rancour, He who ministered while He had breath.  
“Father”, Said He, raising eyes to heaven, “All the work Thou gavest me is done”.  
Shall the loved disciple be forgiven for neglecting work laid on the Son?

## CHRISTIAN BELIEF

Not mere lip-service, praises softly sung,  
Altar-devotion, does God ask of ye,  
Nor prayer from hearts that are too sharply wrung  
To bear the weight of their infirmity.

He does not love the sacrifice of flowers  
That he has given to deck the path ye tread,  
He does not claim the measure of the hours  
That He has writ in stars above your head.

All these are His; presumption flaws the gift  
Of wealth returned that was in kindness given:  
He does but ask you faithfully to lift  
Your earth-bent eyes and erring wills to heaven.

He saith: "I ask that ye should let the sun  
Into your hearts, and bravely stand the light;  
Winced not if it should pain; I have begun  
To win my world more wholly from the night,

That love should flow from man to man, as I  
Have let it freely flow to man from God,  
That ye should follow in His purity  
Him who most meekly man's sad journey trod."

The Galilean showed us once the road,  
Can we not follow? Washed with blood and tears  
Behold His path, sin-free. The end He showed  
To shameful death surrendering His years.

Then shall we falter? Tenderness divine  
Bestowed in toil and pity every hour  
He showed, through tasks to which the low incline  
Weakly or wearily. His was the power

Of infinite forgiveness, fortitude  
To love through suffering, devoid alike  
Of pride or passion, the similitude  
Of God in man He was. Love Him, or strike

His Name with your contempt. Oh, choose your  
part:

You must be with this Man, divine indeed,  
Or else against Him. Brace a willing heart  
Beneath the thorns that tears and make it bleed,

And raise it, mangled, chastened, ever higher,  
To perfect virtue (Expiation? Nay  
But truer justice, plucking out the briar  
Though growing deep about the rose, I say)

Or come and tell Him: "Thou art not my friend;  
Thy way and mine are parted, we must go  
Our several ways to God." But peace, I know  
The pure in heart shall see Him in the end.

## CONFESSION

I am ashamed to moan, though suffering.  
The pain I bear is not a meed severe.  
I am ashamed to weep. The tears I shed  
Are not sufficient to wash out the stains  
Thou knowest, and I. I am ashamed to pray,  
As there is no petition I can make  
But it convicts me of ingratitude  
While importuning Thee for further grace.  
What can I offer that is not Thy gift?  
How can I labor, but sustained by Thee,  
To use the strength Thou dost infuse in me?  
Ah! through my inmost being courses shame,  
And love still hotter than the searing shame  
That bows me, humble, suppliant, at Thy feet.  
I have been proud among my fellow men,  
Borne high my brow, while Thine was crowned with  
    thorns.  
I have been shaken with that earth-born ague  
A sickened longing for a human love,  
And struggled on my way only to feel  
The cut and sting of brambles and of briars,  
Impeding progress. Lo I come to Thee  
Wounded and fallen. Wilt Thou raise me Lord?  
Once more forbearing Saviour wilt Thou deign?  
I now distrust myself, I dare not say  
As once I did, "Help a last time, a last".  
I know that I have fallen, still may fall,  
And resolutions rosy in the dawn  
Sink cold and lifeless in the dusk of eve.  
I have dragged down the soul Thou gavest me,

And soiled the silver-white baptismal vow  
Upon my forehead; not with sins of sense,  
But with the daily sin of faithlessness.  
I have not so much left of confidence  
Or fortitude to say that I shall stand,  
For I have measured the full stature now  
Of mine own wretchedness; I find it huge  
To overwhelming, and the truth is blazed  
Upon my vision like a furnace glow:  
There is no good in me, my God, my God!  
Whence comes the power which thus can mar Thy  
works?

The issue is indeed most terrible  
Which Thou hast challenged in creating man:  
Thy image is defaced in all Thy sons.  
We fight in darkness, and we sink and die:  
The torch is quenched, how easily—and then,  
What then? Hast Thou no answer but to turn  
Thy glorious Face away, Maker divine?  
Thou knowest the sharp struggles and the blows  
I must sustain in fighting down myself,  
And the unconquerable tendencies  
That bring their curse. Better a thousandfold  
The midnight theft and fierce marauder's sin  
Or brutish crimes of wine-besotted fools,  
Than sin like mine that circles round the dial  
And faces me when e'er I face myself.  
Thou clear coast beacon of life's driving sea,  
Shine on the rocks of our impending doom  
And guide to haven those who trust in Thee.

## MEDITATION

Through the wide window shone the Paschal moon,  
Where in an upper chamber, gathered round  
Their Master, sat the twelve apostles, soon  
To lose Him. In the night a rustling sound

Of boughs scarce flowered, and a tender scent  
And soft wings by the casement brushing sped ;  
While glinting sidelong the pure lustre lent  
Its limpid glory to the Saviour's head.  
The lamp upon the table flickered clear  
And threw grouped shadows on the naked wall ;  
Or did celestial cohorts hover near  
To draw a ready weapon at His call ?  
A hush was spread upon Jerusalem  
As Jesus sat with those He loved so well,  
And broke the bread and drank the wine with them,  
Then on the awed assembly silence fell.  
O rapt communion, when the chalice borne  
In His own hand with light suffused the gloom,  
Not to be theirs again till Easter morn  
Beheld the open sepulchre illumine !  
O fleeting space for strong devotion's plea,  
Of full oblation offered to His love,  
When each heart echoes, "I will die with Thee,"  
Pronouncing vows temptation shall disprove !  
He did not dwell on His own suffering,  
Nor upon Judah's dark o'erhanging doom,  
Nor on His people's cry that was to bring  
His radiant life in anguish to the tomb ;  
Sharper than nails and thorn, the pang of love  
Rejected, pierced Him and He sought to save :  
By martyr-prophecy He strove to win  
Judas Iscariot from a traitor's grave.  
He told of a deceiver's presence. Yea,—  
Could Judas live and yet endure the smart ?  
He pointed out the hand that should betray,  
And probed the foulness of a human heart.  
He gazed upon the sheep which He had lost  
Out of the fold that Scripture be fulfilled,  
And as the swords of Christ and Satan crossed  
Perchance the eyes of the Redeemer filled,  
Granting the monstrous sin a final grace,

The pity of a God about to die,  
While Judas looked into that wondrous Face,  
Questioning also: "Master is it I?"  
Then Judas went into the deepening night,  
And of his alien presence freed, great peace  
Upon the Master brooded, for His sight  
Embraced the sacrifice and the release.  
He nevermore should taste with them the fruit  
Of clustered vine. They marveled at the word.  
This was the last time Hell in fierce pursuit  
Should challenge Him ere crowned; the last they  
heard

His prayer in breaking bread; the mystic feast  
No more He was to share; thus He would leave  
An empty throne in Israel; the High Priest  
Forsake their altar: theirs the hour to grieve.  
But as the youngest leaned upon His breast,  
Surely some whispered consolation given  
Spoke to the loved disciple what the rest  
Should learn when He had entered into Heaven.  
"All be offended!" Untried faithfulness,  
Simeon's—and like the rough-hewn block of stone  
Waiting the chisel—cries out in distress:  
"Though all shall fail, I follow Thee alone."  
Sweet the familiar converse with Him seemed,  
And vividly the past returned to mind:  
The misery His mercy had redeemed,  
The broken reed that He had stooped to bind.  
And teachings listened to with idle ears,  
While resting on the broad suspended oar,  
And parables scarce marked in other years  
Recurring with meaning never known before.  
They thought of Him as He rebuked the storm,  
The Christ so dimly comprehended yet,  
Whose unrecorded utterances inform  
The silent margin of Genesaret.  
And three, the chosen, could recall the scene

Upon the sacred mountain where they saw  
His majesty, as praying He had been  
Unveiled between the Prophets and the Law.  
But now the words they harkened to with dread  
Conveyed a strange sad warning from the Lord:  
"I send you not as once I did," He said,  
"Provide you scrip and purse, and buy a sword."  
Their souls aglow with His divine farewell  
His charge, "Do this in memory of Me,"  
They followed Him across the broken dell  
Where Kedron flowed below Gethsemane.  
None in the solitude shall pray with Him,  
And none shall see the sweat upon His brow;  
Beneath the Olive trees the moon is dim  
Only one angel waits upon Him now.  
When He is led into the judgment hall  
Simon denies Him, others turn to fly:  
Yet they rose consecrated from the fall—  
That night had taught them faith in Calvary.

### IN THE WILDERNESS

When Jesus went into the wilderness  
At God's own word to meet the Tempter there,  
He never yet had looked on Satan's face  
With human eyes, and thus invisible  
Satan addressed the Saviour of mankind.  
"Thou whom I scarcely dare to name, but love  
Since hovering near, I first descried thy home  
Whose threshold I did never desecrate  
With my unhallowed step. Thou whom I loved  
A youth among thy comrades, full of grace  
And full of power, so much thyself, in spite  
Of shrouding, that I marvel still to see  
Thy majesty unhonoured among men;  
Thou virgin-born, who didst escape the stain  
Of parent sin, thou never yet hast felt  
Polluting touch of mine. In angel form

Thine early days have often watched me pass  
Upon the market place and on the road,—  
Thou hast not ever seen me otherwise,  
For I was not to meet thy boyhood's gaze.  
My wing brushed not the lintel of thy house;  
But through the open doorway, like a wind  
Hot from the East of Jordan, blew about  
The fragrant shavings scattered from thy plane  
And threw them whirling out into the air  
As I have tossed the souls of evil men.  
I mingled with the sun that through the roof  
Beamed on thy mother from thy Father's eye;  
So watched thee on her lap, and wondering;  
So heard her later teach thee word by word  
The song she learned of angels, about thee.  
Dost thou remember, at Capernaum,  
One evening by the well-side came a maid  
To draw, and thou didst stoop and lower down  
Her earthen pitcher, 'mid the little stars  
That laughed at heaven? A moving in the leaves  
Which thou didst take to be a dusky owl  
Disturbed among the laurels, startled her,  
And trembling she drew back. It was my shade  
Unseen of thee, she saw across the well.  
My love should not offend thee, since as much  
As any of the loveliest things that breathe,  
I claim thy workmanship, an instrument  
Within thy hand, as surely as the tool  
In Joseph's workshop, laying hold of which  
Thy holy fingers wrought a thing of use.  
I could not see thy manhood ripen out  
Into its fullness like the rounded moon  
Above yon barren desert, and not feel  
Its beauty stir me as the solemn words  
Men sometimes speak at death. I could not be  
So miserable, even in the fall  
That cast me from my state, as to forget

Thy face, Jehovah, though I see it veiled.  
 My love shall not offend thee, though my hand  
 At thy decree withstand and seek to foil.  
 Here, gifted with the power to overthrow,  
 I worship thee and supplicate thee, Stand.  
 Conquer, and hasten on the end of days  
 Till this my work accomplished, and forgiven  
 Mine own offence, I be restored to sight  
 Of thy revealed effulgence. This is hell  
 To be withheld thy presence. This is hell  
 To be thy messenger of trial, the stone  
 Whereon the world must stumble. Death itself  
 Bears no such weight of terrible distress  
 As I, accursed and wandering the earth.  
 To watch the blush of shame rise in a cheek  
 That was as lily pure as those same flowers  
 Thou trod'st about the fields of Nazareth;  
 To whisper foul rebellion in an ear  
 That just has heard its Maker's ordinance;  
 And when a man has risen from his knees,  
 To pluck good resolution from his grasp  
 Until he scorns himself—yea, this is hell.  
 Thou once didst see me drop, a levin bolt,  
 Into the void. Drive now the power from earth  
 That thwarts thine end." But Jesus here first spoke:  
 "It cannot thwart me but as I allow.  
 I will not yet drive evil from the earth.  
 Satan, the hour of peace is not yet come.  
 Son of destruction, I am come through thee  
 To feel the heaviest scourge that ever fell  
 Upon the shoulders of a criminal."  
 "If I obey"—thus Satan,—“I must strike  
 Thy manhood in its frailty till the flame  
 Flickers upon thy lamp and horror spreads  
 Within the darkened chambers of thy will.  
 So when the story of thy life is told  
 For future generations, words shall fail

The writer to express thine agony.  
Not iron driven through thy living flesh,  
Nor public shame that withers self esteem,  
Nor the forsaking by thy bosom friend,  
Nor deafness to thy prophecies, nor sight  
Of the despairing woman by the Cross,  
Not the withdrawal of thy God's support,  
Nor yet thy awful meeting Death alone  
Shall minister this cup of bitterness;  
For know, the King of Terrors is not Death:  
Omniscient save of evil in thyself,  
Or of the stress brought on a human soul  
When I approach and speak and stand revealed."  
Then Jesus, with mild firmness answered him:  
"That I shall conquer thee, I do believe,  
Confiding in the strength He grants to men,  
Who saith He will not suffer thee to tempt  
Beyond endurance. I have laid aside  
The power that hurled thee through the gates of  
dawn.

Reveal thyself to me and I shall meet  
Thine onset, and repel it as a man."  
At this command, the wilderness, laid bare,  
Concealed from Jesus' sight all loveliness.  
A leopard glided to his feet and fixed  
The desert's gaze upon his solitude;  
Searing and still, the rocks strew'd all about  
Mock shapes of bread, to him alone thus given  
A stone in lieu of daily sustenance,  
And he could find no water for his lips.  
Then Satan answered Jesus: "To obey  
I must again be what I was before  
I rushed from Paradise, a hurricane,  
Into the vales of Hell. A mighty Shape  
Once more in this encounter I shall stand,  
As when I routed all thy Seraphim  
Upon the heavenly field. Arise! Prepare

Thyself, O God in mortal guise. Fulfill  
Thy wondrous thought. Lo! darkness shall prevail  
Upon thy soul of light when I take up  
The spiritual weapons at thy word,  
As seen through human eyes behold me then,  
And gather all thy strength to look on me."

## THE PROPHET

*(To my Brother)*

In the cool shade of Lebanon, at noon,  
A young man trod the mountain path alone,  
A skin about his loins, and his bare head  
All unprotected from the beating sun  
That glared upon the naked rocks above,  
Where he was soon to walk. Beside him lay,  
Bathed in the shimmering noonday heat, a stretch  
Of grassy meadows where the bleating flocks  
Nibbled, and brawling rills foamed on the stones  
That lay about the mountain foot in piles  
Strewn like the fragments of a ruined wall.  
Yet work of human hands was none around:  
Far as the eye could reach, the waving plain,  
Colored with varying lights, spread out before,  
And palm trees' feathered branches crowned the tops  
Of broken hillocks, on a sky so blue,  
So deep and shadowless, the dazzling light  
Seemed to pour down in sheets of living flame  
From the huge vaulting of a painted dome  
Pillared upon the heights of Lebanon.  
Fair from the plain, and fairer from the hill  
Was the wide prospect, as the young man stood  
And gazed upon it from beneath his hand.  
But little pleasure seemed he to derive  
From the long contemplation, for a sigh  
Escaped him, and he turned upon his way.  
And the pure light of his deep eyes appeared  
To glow more strangely and to fix upon

An inward vision as he climbed the hill;  
Now struggling with the thorny shrubs that grow  
In crannies of the rock, now breathing hard  
And straining nerve and sinew to obtain  
A foothold, as the earth beneath him yields  
And loosened stones slide dizzily away.  
Wild were the leap from such a height to fall  
Down to the stream that twinkles there below!  
And the bent cedar round whose ancient trunk  
He clasps his arm, creaks with the weight unused,  
Ready to totter. But the sailor's eye  
Is not more steady than the mountaineer's,  
And such the children of the soil are trained  
Where the scant pasture of the valley leads  
The herdsman to the heights his flocks to feed;  
Or simple huntsmen, armed with knife and bow  
Track the wild beast unto his native lair  
To furnish food and raiment. And the hand  
That torn with briar and brushwood, such a grasp  
Yet lays upon yon cedar-bough, the eye  
That roams so fearlessly along the steep,  
Have driven the knife into the panting quarry  
And winged the errless arrow to the mark.  
But other purpose far now brings him here,  
For in his hand nor bow nor shepherd's staff  
He holds, no wallet for the needs of life,  
For food and water in this wilderness  
He carries,—nothing; and his being seems  
Within it one absorbing thought to bear,  
And one alone. Now, as he wins the top,  
He lays himself upon the ground, and rests  
His head upon his hand, beneath a rock  
That throws a clear-cut shadow on the grass  
Against the sunlight reared. And the still shade  
Slowly revolving, slowly died away,  
The sunset lights sank from the flaming hills,  
The distant snows flushed crimson and grew pale,

As though the mountains kindled all to fire  
 And then to ashes turned, and twilight hushed  
 The cheerful sounds of wood and field and vale,  
 While in the fresh'ning sky a violet shade  
 Crept up and up, and all the stars appeared.  
 Yet still he lay, his head upon his hand.  
 Surely no idler would have toiled so hard  
 To climb this lonely height for pleasure's sake,  
 For lounging in the sunny grass all day!  
 And that strong frame was never bound and knit  
 Without the effort of an active will.  
 Nor does he seem in ecstasy to lie  
 Like some day-dreamer, weaving in his brain  
 Poetic fancies, for his eye is clear  
 And like a beacon still and steady burns  
 Beneath his waving hair. Some thought is there  
 And every sense is hushed as in his soul  
 He follows out his meditation high.  
 But wherefore in this desert? Is there not  
 Space for seclusion in the pleasant vale?  
 What theme pursues his thought, must needs com-  
 mand  
 This awful solitude? Forbear to ask:  
 The ground whereon ye walk is holy ground,  
 Yea, put the shoes from off your feet and kneel.  
 As night invades the hills a rising wind  
 Rustles amid the sun-dried grass, a breath  
 That seems of some eternal spirit stirs  
 The soundless air. Then the young man arose,  
 Folded his arms upon his breast, and walked  
 Beneath the stars with bended head and words  
 He heeded not escaping from his lips:—  
 "I am unworthy of so high a task,  
 And young, and unexperienced, seek, I pray,  
 Another for this office, Lord, not me."  
 But in the wind a voice was heard to say:  
 "It is for Me to make My choice,—not thee."

"I am a child in years, a child in mind,  
And in Thy sight, the wisest but a child,  
Eternal Wisdom." And again the Voice:  
"Wisdom is Mine and I will teach thee truth:  
Do thou My will." At this, upon his knee  
The young man fell, for he was overwhelmed  
Before that Presence. Throbbing in his veins  
The hot blood went and came, as if a blow  
Had felled him to the ground,  
While in his ear the solemn words still rang:  
"Do thou My will."

What struggle in his breast  
Awakens at the sound? For in his hands  
His face he hides, and: "Spare me, Lord!" he cries,  
With all his soul in keenest agony  
And supplication straining, and his face  
In its full manly vigor, stamped with pain  
So sharp and deep that every line is wrung.  
"Thou shrinkest from thy weakness, not the task,  
But what the task must tear thee from." The Voice  
Fell burning on his ear, and lower bent,  
He bowed as in a storm the forest oak,  
Bare to the lightning veils its top and bows  
Before the storm. "The world has little joy,  
And gladly would I leave the world," he said;  
Or rather, through his mind, the thought on wings  
As swift as swallows flew, or as a bird,  
Flutt'ring to hide its treasure, to the view  
Suddenly bared; for as an open book  
The thought is read by Him who knows the hearts  
Of men, all naked in His sight exposed.  
"Thou wouldst not leave the world until the face  
Of one thou lovest fadeth from thy heart."  
"Thou knowest all things, and Thou knowest this,"  
He answered. "Vain to hide, vain to deny,  
(And that I would not if I could) the truth.  
Thou knowest better far than I myself

How much in me there is to train and teach,  
How much to strengthen and to purify.  
Weak in this inward battle, how should I  
Preach to Thy people and declare Thy word?  
But if it must me so, Thy instrument  
Is in Thy hand, Almighty, lift Thou me,  
I cannot raise myself, but kneel to Thee,  
And Thou Who gavest the will canst give the power  
To reach to Thee." "Nay, thou must choose alone  
To stand or fall," the Voice in answer said,  
And all was silence. Thus, throughout the night  
The arching heavens silent looked upon  
The kneeling man and on the starlit hills.

Then, with the dawn, he rose, the traces still  
Of that night-struggle in his stern sad face,  
But master of his will. No food had touched  
His lips since yestermorn, and many a day  
Upon the heights was to arise and set  
Ere food should touch again the lips to prayer  
Now consecrated. But the trial o'erpast,  
One quiet eve he bent his steps once more  
To that green valley whence he came, and there  
He mingled with his fellow-men, but not  
As erst he did; while all in wonder gazed  
Or spoke to him with awe; for in his eye  
And on his brow was set the burning mark  
Of Him Who said: "I will baptize with fire."

PARNASSIA PALUSTRIS



## PARNASSIA PALUSTRIS

I oft have watched thee bend and toss  
Where on a mountain's windy crest  
The winged steed had stamped, the moss  
With starry hoofs, to flight address.  
And often as I roved among  
The pastures of my Eastern land,  
Thy pale white blossoms I have strung  
In garlands with a childish hand.  
Their loveliness unknown to fame  
Still glimmers in the upland grass  
And thus amid my verse thy name  
Shall twinkle as the wind doth pass.

## GRASS OF PARNASSUS

*"The flower I speak of is a white cup, veined by  
a delicate green tracery, upheld on a straight slender  
almost grass-like stem and containing a circle of  
peculiar velvety, pale green stamens . . . one of the  
most exquisite of its kind and growing as it does in  
. . . desert places, one of the most ethereal looking."  
London Spectator.*

## WILD SWAN

He rocks to the waters' rhythmic sound  
And flashes a pearly gem  
Upon Leman's brow of azure, bound  
By the mountain's diadem.  
Glorious in fullness of noonday hue,  
When a dazzling radiance glows  
Over the woodland, and dries the dew  
On the warm lips of the rose.

Soft, in the reeds where the river glides  
Into the arms, of the lake  
Blows the wild wind, while the plover hides  
Amid the cool, waving brake.  
Amid the reeds, like a flame of white  
Enclosed in a silver ring,  
Rocks the swan in his cradle of light  
To the breeze's whispering.

The fishers steer in the grey of the dawn  
In the dusk of snow-storm-driven.  
I hear the roll of a chariot borne  
On the mighty winds of heaven:  
Billows break on the breast of the lake  
And lash into yeasty foam,  
The fishers reef and for harbor make,  
For the swan is flying home.

Stretch forth thy sinews, O swan, O Love,  
Thy flight o'er the water flings  
A shadow below, to clouds above,  
The deep whirring of thy wings.  
Stretch forth thy sinews, then sink to rest  
In thy nest of reeds and down,  
As on the steel of the glacier's crest  
Dawn sets her eglantine crown.

Upon the lake is a castle wierd ;  
Its courts with splendour fill  
When the moon's enchanted rim has cleared  
The top of the nearest hill.  
Tall pines like sentinels, stand straight  
In lines all round about it,  
And mounted horsemen silent wait  
Within it and without it.

Washing the base of its terrace stair  
Sough the waters of the lake.  
A mist-robed maid is watching where  
Waves upon the marble break.  
To the feet of her who stands forlorn  
With outstretched arms in the night  
The form of a stately swan is borne  
On the gem strewed waves of light.

When comes the dawn, are thy white wings furled  
With the moonlight's wizard beams,  
Mysterious guest of the wonder-world,  
O Swan of the land of dreams!

### SONG

Alas for the wind in the timothy field,  
As it blew in those days, as it blew,  
When the love of my heart, like a fountain unsealed,  
Flowed for you dearest love, flowed for you.

Yet once more let the sun through the apple bough  
shine,  
As it gleamed at the dawn, as it gleamed,  
Once again be your love to this old heart of mine  
What it seemed at eighteen, what it seemed.

For an hour, let the clouds with a mantle of grey  
Veil the barren horizon of truth,  
And the dim purple hills fold the present away  
Whilst I breathe in the air of my youth.

## LURELEI

Witch's fingers on the harp  
Touch the light strings;  
Witch's hand through woof and warp  
The shuttle swings,  
Magic in the swirling stream  
In Rhine's dark pool:  
Death in thy blood-curdling scream  
Poor drowning fool!

Still the foam dances golden  
Over the place;  
None has ever beholden  
The dead man's face.  
Who shall give words to thy song,  
Enchanted swirl,  
Who watch for thee all night long,  
O Fairy Girl?

Elf-light dances on her rock,  
Dread Lurelei!  
Spell-bound fishers hear her mock  
Their lullaby.  
Wild her yellow hair is tost,  
Water sprites gloat  
Over the fisherman lost,  
Lost with his boat.

## ENGINE 72

Fire! Fire! Fire!  
Who are these that ride on the wings of the wind  
To the clang of a brazen bell,  
While the lurid light is vaulting higher:  
Have the men or their fathers sinned  
That they ride top speed into hell?

Fire! Fire! Fire!

The crimson curse hangs on a pillar of smoke.

The shrill call sounds! These fly to greet  
Death and the hero's funeral pyre,

Where struggling titans hiss and choke  
As the flames and the waters meet.

Fire! Fire! Fire!

Amid crashing beams and a sickly stench

They have battled with odds too great;  
And through falling bricks and pools of mire,

They leap to the grave and wrench  
Living bays from the hand of Fate.

### THE SECRET OF THE SHELL

Where grew the flowers that blossom here?

"In China-land," I hear them say,

Where bamboo towns bear names so queer,  
And where the feldspar turned to clay.

Once on the strand was found a shell,

Its half-closed, silent, gleaming lip

Turned to the wave that rose and fell

And left it lustrous with the drip,

The foam of native Crine. A man

Whose years were spent in studious thought,

Whose eyes were bent to peer and scan

The nature marvels that he sought,

Had found the shell that owned no name.

Through days of patient toil he strove,

Before the stubborn furnace flame,

To twin that shell. A Vision clove

Its folded curtains, where it lay  
On the porch matting. Have I said  
This happened in a by-gone day?  
Dim splendour lit the Vision's head:

It spoke in this wise: "Fire, and glaze  
And fire again. In deeps I grew,  
Where sleep all hidden things." Amaze,  
That stole away its proper hue

Spread on the Potter's yellow face.  
I did not state his face was yellow;  
It was the fashion of his race:  
The hue was rich, antique and mellow.

He answered not, but promptly fell  
To putting back into the oven  
His rounded clay, and did full well;  
Ere long the Kaolin had proven

A mimic sea shell, smooth and fair.  
Such is the story as he told it.  
"'Tis brittle," quoth the Sprite, and rare,  
Be careful as to how you hold it."

In fire the Potter dipped his brushes,  
And with its wondrous hues arrayed  
His pots, that on the floor of rushes  
The scenes of China-land displayed.

So you can see them if you will,  
The glories of the glaze and stain,  
Whenever on your window-sill  
You set a vase of porcelain. (1)

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(1) Porcelain, from *porcelana* "a little pig", so called by the Portuguese traders, from its resemblance to cowrie-shells, the shape of which is not unlike a pig's back. The Chinese earthenware, being white and glossy like the inside of the shells suggested the application of the name.—Brewer Dict. of Phrase and Fable.

Warriors in golden armour cross  
Gem-hilted weapons, on a field  
Pied with strange flowers and emerald moss,  
And apple trees of onyx yield

Their garnet fruit. A high-bred maiden,  
Screening her smile from some gay lord,  
With gorgeous vesture heavy laden,  
Trips over an enamel sward.

Or cranes of huge dimensions scare  
A brood of iridescent ducks,  
And fish of unknown waters flare  
And float beneath an amber "flux."

Or turquoise bridges, on a ground  
Of molten pearl, throw azure shades,  
And brooks of indigo flow round  
The twisted roots of violet glades.

In that dim land of long ago,  
Amid its secrets long time hid,  
Did those odd little flowers blow  
To blossom on your tea pot lid.

## SONG

This is Spring's hymen, where art thou  
Thou whom I love? Here she trails,  
Trails with her scented robe touching,  
Touching the stream and the fields;  
Fields where the primrose is peeping,  
Peeping and calling for thee,  
Thee O beloved of my young days,  
Days that forever are flown.

## TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

He shed a kindly light, still rich to give,  
With lavish bounty unimpoverished.  
For open to the heavens like a mount  
That feeds the valleys with perennial streams,  
He taught the kindness that he learned of God.

## VISION

She walked by the sea in her robe of blue  
And the waves ran in at her feet,  
Her golden feet of the cliff's own hue  
As it glows in the mid-day heat.  
And her red hair flew to the east and west  
Like the weeds of an ocean cave,  
Wherever they float on a mermaid's breast  
Or cover a sailor's grave.

## EDITH OF TYNEWOLD

*(Ballad)*

Ho! light the hall, prepare the feast,  
Lord Edgar's daughter weds to-night  
With Malvern Grey who in the East  
Hath won the spurs of Christian Knight.

Three years ago their secret troth  
They plighted in the cedar grove,  
But kept it from Earl Edgar, loth  
To bring his curse upon their love.

For higher then could no man look  
Than Tynewold Hall, throughout the land,  
And ill would Lion Edgar brook  
To grant a Squire his daughter's hand.

The dial-shadow, day by day,  
Still left unchanged the lovers' hearts;  
She grew to womanhood, and Grey  
Wandered and fought in distant parts.

Years come and go, the taper burns;  
At last the old Lord Edgar died.  
To-night Sir Malvern Grey returns  
To claim and wed his promised bride.

Now hark! the warder's bugle rings,  
And hark! The sound of horses feet,  
The window wide the lady flings  
To be the first her Knight to greet.

Thus standing in the clear torchlight  
Some fairy vision Edith seems,  
While out upon the snowy night  
The radiance from the window beams.

A rider leads two steeds apace,  
With battle stains upon his dress  
Full freshly flecked in eager chase,  
The other horse is riderless.

"Across the bleak and desert wold  
That sentinels the gusty plain,"  
Sir Malvern's Squire the story told,  
"His charger flew with trailing rein.

We followed to the Devil's bowl  
That gleams half hidden in the brake,  
Secured and tracked him to the knoll  
That shelves above that baleful lake.

The dawn confirmed our worst alarms;  
Whinned the charger white with froth,

Bearing the dragon coat of arms,  
Embroidered on his saddle cloth."

Weep, Lady Edith, weep and pray,  
They shall not ring thy wedding bell;  
In crystal deep lies Malvern Grey,  
And the pale Undines toll his knell.

Extinguished is the nuptial torch,  
And dirges chant the virgin train,  
While standing in the chapel porch,  
The friar leads the mournful strain.

"Now haste ye for the hour is late  
My Father," Lady Edith cried,  
"And open wide the convent gate  
For thus I yet shall be a bride."

The meekest soul in nun array,  
She toiled, resigned beneath the stroke,  
Till once it chanced at close of day  
The thread that she was spinning broke.

She circled round the outer close  
Of what was once her father's hall;  
Her white veil brushed a climbing rose  
Festooned about the crumbling wall.

The vesper-bell was heard afar,  
The trample of a straggling flock,  
And from the lilac skies a star  
Dropt to the forehead of a rock.

The wild flowers huddled in the damp  
That falls at eve. Along the road  
Flared here and there a glow-worm's lamp  
Sprung from her path a frightened toad.

A stir of cedars in the grove  
Peopled the mountain air with sighs,  
And listening, Edith vainly strove  
To stem the rush of memories.

"Forgive the thoughts that will intrude,  
Short-comings of our idle hours,  
Fancies that swarm in solitude  
Like bats about the darkened towers ;

For wind-swept ivies words may find,  
And where a sudden footstep falls,  
In silent ruins of the mind  
A wing may start from crannied walls."

So prayed she, for a figure stood  
In saffron gloam, that sent a thrill  
Through the parched channels of her blood.  
As water from a cooling rill

To men long wounded in the fight.  
Sir Malvern in the flesh had not  
Looked prouder than this phantom knight  
Nor walked with surer tread, God wot.

She prayed aloud, "Sweet Saints release  
His soul from doom of death unshriven,  
And may my tribulations cease  
When he and I shall meet in heaven."

"Now by the rood, thou gentle nun,  
An Ave shalt thou say for me,  
But first I fain would hear of one  
Who gave me this gold ring, pardee!"

Then in the failing light, the man  
Held up a ruby studded gem

Of cunning workmanship that ran  
About a Countess' diadem.

"Ah! Maris Stella! Star of wrecks  
Save or we perish!" So the cry  
Starts from the washed and driven decks  
Amid the storm that blanks the sky.

Thus Edith, in the wildering blast  
That swept her, as that voice she heard;  
She scanned the bearded face aghast,  
And fluttered like a stricken bird.

Lo, nobly stands the forest pine  
Though winter weigh its boughs to earth,  
And nobly does the red sun shine  
Though bitter frost lie on the earth.

As nobly bore Sir Malvern Grey  
His faithful brand and dragon crest,  
Though hoar upon his temple lay,  
Nor did he ween whom he addresst.

The distaff fell, the sable thread  
She held between her fingers broke;  
" 'Twas Lady's Edith's ring," she said,  
And scarcely knew the words she spoke.

Beneath the stroke from which she reeled,  
Her thought was all of sparing him.  
The flowing habit scarce revealed  
Her figure in the twilight grim.

"Sister! Beshrew the cloister lore  
That little recks of helm and lance,"—  
"The maid you seek, Sir, is no more,"  
She faltered, with averted glance.

"Edith of Tynewold could not die,  
For Death had never dared to set  
His mists upon her jewel eye,  
Upon her eye of violet!

Edith of Tynewold is alive,  
By all the hopes that in me swell  
And I shall burn your thrifty hive  
If she be hidden in a cell."

"Nay, Sir, beyond the close where lie,  
Dry buried piles of dead nun's bones,  
Her grave is hid in bryony,  
And scattered with the mountain stones.

She sleeps beside a running brook,  
But none shall ever know the spot,  
For sinfully her life she took,  
The maiden that you loved is not."

Sir Malvern gazed with dawning dread  
On her set lips and quivering brow;  
"Edith had heard that thou wast dead  
And then endured what thou dost now."

A crimson tide flowed o'er his face  
And left it whiter than the May,  
"I loved thee girl, so help me Grace  
And shall unto my dying day."

## ON THE ATLANTIC

1894

I once saw a face in the crowd,  
Eight long days, while the ship to and fro  
Flung her weight on the billow, and ploughed  
Her straight furrow of foam:

Though all his companions, chance grown  
To acquaintance, would wear out the slow  
Creeping hours with dull mirth, he alone  
Wandered back to his home.

To his home? Was the song of a wife,  
Was the lisp of a child in his ears? . . .  
Nay, methinks that the life of his life  
Had flickered and died.  
Early grey tinged a brow crossed and high,  
And the softness of early shed tears  
Like a mist dimmed the fire of an eye  
That no woman had dried.

For he walked quite alone in the throng  
With his spirit turned inward, or bowed  
O'er a book while his eye lingered long  
On the low fleeting verge.  
And perchance in the distance he sought  
For a dream that the foam like a shroud  
Wrapt about, as the wind hissed and fought  
The huge roll of the surge.

What his voice was, I know not. By choice  
He spoke not, and none spoke to him.  
So I heard not his speech, and the voice  
Oft the nature reveals.  
Was it mellow and deep as the sound  
Of the bell that was cleft to the brim  
And thus broken, yet pours to the ground  
Such harmonious peals

That the roar of the great city street  
Will be lulled for a moment to hear  
As the dim air vibrates to the beat  
Of its deep throated toll?  
Or else was it muffled and low,

Dull with sorrow, a leaf that is sear  
In the prime of its summer?—I know  
Grief can deaden the soul.

Or it may be an impulse short-sighted,  
The fault that a man must redeem  
By a life time dishonored, unknighthed,  
Set its brand on his brow,  
Left an anguish too fierce to be borne  
Without flinching: at times it would seem  
To flash out in the bitter self-scorn  
Of a strong soul laid low.

His were thews of a powerful race:  
Though humbled his glance and though riven  
His heart, there was force in his face,  
In its glint and its gloam.  
And I thought 'He is lonely and proud,'  
As the vessel 'mid rain wind-driven  
Cast her weight on the billow and ploughed  
Her straight furrow of foam.

## WHERE OTHERS SHALL TREAD

*June, 1894, Mountain Lake Park*

He stands upon the deck, watching the waves  
Ruffled with colder breezes from the Pole;  
Far down the fleeting verge the point he craves  
To reach lies hid his voyage's far goal  
On this he bends a gaze with which he sends his soul.

Now o'er the greenish flood a shadow passed,  
Flung from the gathering clouds that fled the gale,  
Now stoops the headlight of the reeling mast,  
Now in the dead mist droops the idle sail,  
Where to avoid the ice lights are of no avail.

As her lone course the faithful vessel steers  
Shunning the crystal rocks on either side,  
Or swift and free she bounds, or deftly veers,  
To plough a stealthy passage through the tide,  
Still in the bow he stands, careless whate'er betide.

Searching the blinding mist with eager eyes,  
Wrapt in his dream though dim and distant far :  
"I still shall see above my head" he cries,  
"The wheeling circles of the Northern star,  
In that vast sea beyond the frozen bar"!

And yet the moaning of the restless waters,  
And yet the glitter of the wintry skies,  
And yet the old chant of the Ocean's daughters,  
Frought with the dirge of human destinies  
Called up a moment's shadow in his eyes.

Sharp was the wind that froze the dripping ropes,  
It chilled and numbed him to the very heart;  
So shall the future freeze my sunny hopes  
He mused, when waking with a sudden start  
He gave his men the signal to depart.

For 'mid the rush and wail of wind and water  
Framed with the glamour of the pale lit ice,  
Locked in among the crashing blocks that caught her,  
The ship was held and ground as in a vice.

Ice bound! and lighted with the arctic glow  
That dimly showed ridge, mound and vale of ice  
And cast a ghastly radiance on the snow;  
Fed with coarse food that hardly could suffice,  
They toiled along. Fame, Science, what a price,

Ye cost! and O how lightly weighs a life  
Against ye! Yet your hope so very fair,

Love, Duty, Honour, cannot cope with strife  
Such as men face for you without despair  
Such as you marineer is meeting there.

With sledge and axe he fleets across the snows,  
Furrowing the track of dogs, the Arctic steeds;  
Cheering his men, while none among them knows  
How much a heartening word himself he needs,  
So with his life his young the pelican feeds.

Patience, and hope! the toil, the hardships borne  
The twilight travel on a pathless way,  
The cold, the sickness and the dread forlorn  
Each entertains no more to see the day  
Must end. But now "We care not how" they say.

Onward, still on they plod, and every camp  
At leaving marks a sad and lonely grave  
Without a name, locked in the unfriendly clamp  
Of closing ice, far from the sounding wave  
In everlasting silence. And the brave

Grow dull and careless: thought and hope and fear  
Sink to one frozen level, like the sheet  
Of countless snows around them. Does he hear  
Their dying groans, or has it ceased to beat  
With human feeling, that stout heart? Too fleet

Thy eager sledge O marineer! The sea  
Thou gav'st thy life to find is not. Farewell.  
The sun will never shine again for thee  
And bitter silence tolls thy barren knell.  
Thou loved'st thy wondrous dream too well too  
well!

Searching the distant shore with failing eyes,  
Sinking in death, yet gazing still afar:

“Forever round my sleeping head,” he cries  
“Wheel thy pale circles, O thou northern star  
In this vast waste beyond the frozen bar”.

## SONG

If a man and a woman love  
With all their heart, I say—  
With all their heart,  
And one of them drift away,  
What shall the life of the other prove,  
After they part?

While the wanderer shall rove  
From rose to gold and grey,  
In church and mart  
The other shall watch and pray,  
At every step in the desert grove  
Shall pale and start,

Shall say, “I valiantly strove,  
But never could allay  
The rankling smart,  
For as the surf to the spray,  
As the shade of the elms to the dove,  
My life thou art.”

## THE SPIRIT OF THE STORM

(*Mentor, Ohio*)

He was clad like a thing  
That a madman remembers,  
In dreams: glowed with the sting  
That crawls out of dead embers,  
Worms its way through a drift  
Of grey smothering ashes,

Into nothingness whiffed  
With a beat of the lashes.  
And he sat on a bough  
That was dead to the core,  
Wrenched, I cannot tell how  
For I do not know more,  
Into hideous shape  
As it pushed through the wall  
That flung vines out, to drape  
An old grave with a pall.  
And he played on a lute  
That shrieked out like the stones  
Between Charles the Fifth's boot  
And Imperial bones  
In the chapel at Aix,  
When raised one throne-step higher  
Fair haired Carolus Rex  
Doffed his crown to his sire.  
Thus the Storm Spirit mocked  
At the wreck and the spar  
And the bell that is rocked  
To the moan of the bar:  
"Let the gurgle and rush  
O'er the topgallant swirl,  
Let the sailor's grave blush  
With rose coral and pearl,  
Let the "purple veil" float  
Like a banner o'erhead,  
And the jelly-fish gloat  
On the feast that is spread."  
Thus the Storm Spirit sang  
As he swung in the bell  
And the church steeple rang  
With the sound of a knell.

Night gallops apace  
With the storm and her hood

Flies back in the race,  
While the moon tears along  
Atop of the trees;  
And the Devil's own gong  
Strikes in minor keys;  
And the whippoorwill wails  
On the edge of the pool,  
And the hurricane rails  
With the voice of a fool.  
"What the storm shall destroy  
I care not, Ha! not I!  
The red flash is a joy  
On the ricks or the rye;  
Where the thunderbolt falls  
Let the highest oak be.  
There are calls, there are calls  
In the tempest for me!"

### SOUVENIR—A SONG

*(December, 1895)*

I seek in vain the flames of dawn  
    Upon a noon day sky,  
The dews have left the rose, the corn  
    And bearded barley lie  
In silent sheaves that gaily swung  
    At morning in the wind,  
The robin's early songs are sung,  
    Dayspring is left behind,  
    Dayspring is left behind.

And other footsteps tread the grass  
    Across the daisied lawn,  
And other voices as they pass  
    Upon the wind are borne,  
    Upon the wind are borne.

And others sing the songs you sung,  
And others say the words you said,  
But O my love my heart is wrung  
Because its love is dead,  
Because its love is dead.

And memory lives but to deride  
Bygone realities,  
For when we stood, love, side by side,  
We each stood singly in our pride,  
Nor sought each other's eyes,—  
Nor sought each other's eyes.

## LETTERS TO MY ALICE

*After the manner of great poets of several ages.*

### Letter 1 (Elizabethan)

*(After the style of Philip Sidney, Knight)*

Why droops my Alice in the leafy dells  
That silence mantles with a hood of green,  
Nor ever answers me, nor ever tells  
How she hath fared since here she last was seen?  
How she hath fared, and what her lightest look  
That the great city's pavement daily meets,  
Whilst I am pining in my dingy nook  
And envy every cloud that southward fleets?

### Letter 2 (Classic)

*(After the style of John Dryden)*

Fair Alice brooks no importunity  
To mar the even tenor of her way,

And still no angel opportunity  
Brings me the news shall wipe my care away.  
Thus swift Diana, she of woodland fame,  
With foot as light as moonbeam on the fern,  
Heedless of men, pursued her sylvan game,  
And wandered free as ripples on the kern.

Letter 3 (Victorian)

*(After the style of Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate)*

Now April on the willow flames,  
A bluebird in the lilac bush  
To all the listening hedge proclaims  
His bursting joy. Now falls the hush

Earth to inspired music yields,  
Upon the pregnant meadow-land,  
Until I long to take your hand  
And walk in silence through the fields.

Letter 4 (Quintessential)

*(After the manner of A. C. Swinburne)*

How glide the days? Write me a line, whisper the  
swallow, friend,  
Swallow fly north; glow of the wine, ray in the  
mists that rend,  
Blush of the bloom, song of the soul, heart of my  
heart's ideal,  
Spin out my dream, leave not the wool idly wound  
round the wheel.  
For I am numb, scarcely alive, like a forsaken close,  
Circled with briars; make me revive, rains that  
splash on the rose;

Oh for the sound of a loved voice, warm as the golden Spring,  
Oh how I long, friend of my choice, long but to hear it ring.

Letter 5 (Undefinable)

*(After the style of Robert Browning)*

What is your reason for not answering me?  
I do not care; Stars wheel their constant course  
Not fretted by the glow-worm, and the sea  
Leaps on dumb crags in scorn—A word of course  
Would cheer,—yet I can do without it, Madam.  
I do not reckon up my paltry gain  
With gold ingot, nor think of unfelt pain,  
Nor of unwritten notes as if I had 'em.

IN ANSWER

*(To Emma)*

“What is friendship?” you ask,  
What shall I say?  
Oh I know, but the task,  
Do what I may,  
Seems like wearing a mask  
In a Greek play.  
What I say is a word  
Not my true self,  
An odd fancy, absurd  
As a carved elf:  
Dumb is the lute you heard  
Back on the shelf.  
Lo a breath at the ear,  
Gleam of a dirk,  
Painful, relentless, clear:

“Take up your work,  
Knowing, feeling me near,  
Tremble nor shirk;  
Longing to be and do  
All that you can,  
All I expect of you,  
Proving the man,  
Proving the woman too.  
Living your span.”  
Grand incentive to rise,  
Noble and pure,  
In your censor’s calm eyes,  
And to endure  
Stings and buzzings of flies  
Since one is sure.  
This is friendship, my friend,  
Second to love,  
More unblamed in the end,  
Rising above  
Storms of passion that rend  
Love’s altar grove.

### ALICE OF THE WOODS

Do you know of a roof that is hidden with boughs  
In the heart of the innermost wood,  
Where a lattice of leaves makes a frame for the face  
That is sweet as the sun and as good?

Do you know of a song that is sung on the bough  
When the brooks will be hushed with delight,  
And the voice of the mountains and angels and stars  
Sink at last in the voice of the night?

Do you know of a friend who stands there at the  
door,  
With a welcome half-spoken for me,

And a burden of blossoms that fade in her hand,  
The dear friend I am longing to see?

Wind and sail, cloud and wing, take me then to the  
place  
Where the dawn on the hills shall awake,  
And the touch of a hand shall bring gladness to me,  
As the purple gleams over the lake.

### THE ERMINE OF BRITTANY

"Potius mori quam fœdari"—So the ermine of  
King Conan,  
White as snow upon the carvings of the great cathe-  
dral door.  
Still she led him on to battle and victorious he fol-  
lowed,  
While the ermine's coat remained immaculate and  
pure.

"Potius mori quam fœdari," welcome death be-  
fore pollution,  
So Armorica's fair motto from the spotless ermine  
came,  
And King Conan was victorious till the ermine's  
coat was sullied,  
By the foe who cast defilement on our Guen of Brit-  
tainy.  
Warriors, in the van our standard glitters with a  
silver splendor,  
Older than the golden lilies, or the Flame of Saint  
Denis.

















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